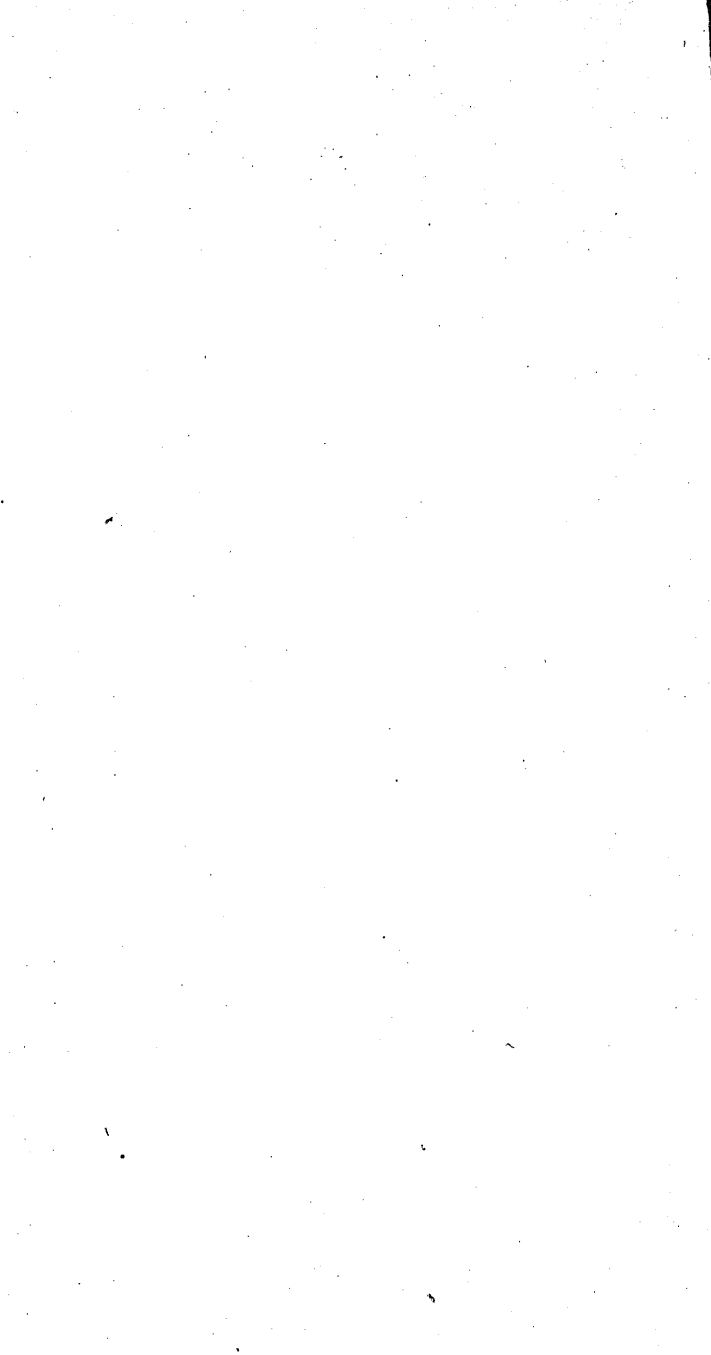


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SEARCH OF TRUTH.

SEARCH OF TRUTH:

A MANUAL OF INSTRUCTION

CONCERNING

THE WAY OF SALVATION.

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CHAPTER I.

THE FACT OF A REVELATION.

RELIGION NECESSARY TO MAN.

RELIGION is a necessity of man's nature. (Only by the power of true religion can human nature be guided to its proper end, and elevated to its destined station.) When men have lost the true religion they always adopt a false one. There are a few instances, indeed, in which they have tried to do without religion—to live in an Atheistic state; but the attempt has proved to be a melancholy failure. The history of the race and the present consciousness of every man, alike testify that a religion of some sort is necessary to human nature.

This fact proves that religion itself is a truth, a reality, a production of the same Almighty power and goodness which gave being to man. The proof is just the same as that which the eye affords of the correlative existence of light; or which the ear presents of the corresponding existence of an arrangement for the production of sound. The existence of a hand proves the necessary co-existence of the arm and body to which it was attached. Bone and muscle mutually prove the existence and reality each of the other. For they are necessary to each other; and either, independent of the other would be worthless, and without a purpose. You cannot see the one, therefore, without being

assured of the co-existence of the other. In the same manner, the adaptation of man's nature to religion, proves that religion is a truth, just as certainly as we know that man himself is a true and real being.

FALSE RELIGIONS PROVE A TRUE ONE.

Some men undertake to discredit all religion, by pointing to the many false religions that have prevailed in the world. The legitimate inference from this fact is just the reverse of that which it is used to establish. It proves, as already said, that religion is felt to be a want, a craving of humanity. But the prevalence of false religions establishes the previous existence of a true one in another way. For there can be no falsehood except as a deviation from truth. Man has no power to create, either things or ideas. He can only change and modify that which already exists. And so, every false and corrupt religion in the world has been but a greater or less departure from an imperishable truth, which had its origin from God, and its foundation in the essential constitution of human nature. The prevalence of each varying and fantastic falsehood is itself an indirect, but powerful testimony to the one unchanging truth which it simulates and misrepresents. You may multiply the copies of a counterfeit bank note to tens of thousands, and scatter them over the land as the autumn leaves, and yet there is but one original note. But there must be the one genuine as the basis of the spurious. And the currency and acceptance of all these counterfeits prove the existence and the value of that one original. The pretended value of them all is derived from the confessed existence and worth of that single original note. So,

the truth of the relations which actually subsist between man and his Maker, and the necessity in human nature for the recognition of those relations, have been the occasion and the source of all the false religions that have prevailed in the world. And the reception of these varied religions proves the existence of the truth from which they derive their value and their currency. x

A REVELATION NEITHER IMPOSSIBLE NOR IMPROBABLE.

The existence of a Great First Cause, the Creator of all things, is generally acknowledged. The particular Providence, the minute superintendence, by that First Cause, of all the works of His hands, so that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without His observation, is another truth which nature teaches. Every inquirer into the works of nature is compelled to acknowledge, that not an atom of creation exists without a purpose,—without a distinct, and definite, and wisely designed object. So perfect, so entire, so minute is this adaptation of means to ends, that a skillful comparative anatomist can determine, from the inspection of a single bone, the genus, and species, and general habits of the animal to which it belonged. For every feature in the conformation of that bone existed for a specific purpose, and those purposes were connected again harmoniously with others; and, by thus following the law of adaptation, the entire skeleton is reconstructed. The minutest atom, invisible to the naked eye, contains within itself, and discloses to us by the aid of microscopes, a complexity of organization, and a series of arrangements, a minute and elaborate adaptation of means to the accomplishment of

preconceived results, which are not surpassed by the wonders of the human system ; and which as perfectly demonstrate the infinity of the power and wisdom of God, as the existence, arrangement, and movements of the heavenly bodies.

The designing mind, the protecting hand, and the superintending care of God, being thus exhibited in every thing, the smallest as well as the greatest, it is obvious that no particular or conceivable mode of communication between that God and His creatures, or any portion of them, can reasonably be pronounced either impossible or improbable. Much less can any revelation of Himself and of His will, which God may be pleased to make to His rational and moral creatures, be thus characterized. Yet it is upon the affirmation of the impossibility or improbability of a particular mode of communication from the Creator to the being whom He has made in His own image, that ancient and modern infidelity deduces its gloomy system of ruin and despair.

NECESSITY OF A REVELATION.

God has certainly revealed Himself to man in all the works of nature and of providence. The being, the attributes, and the perfect law of the SUPREME, may thus be discovered by human intelligence ; or, at least, clearly discerned when once suggested. And if man could find, as the result of his investigations into this wide field of inquiry, a perfect correspondence between Himself and the Divine Mind ; if he saw no confusion, no disorder pervading the vast system of moral and physical agency ; if he discovered no break, no interruption in the chain which connects the Universe with its Author ; if all nature, including man

himself, moved in perfect subordination to the will of the Most High, then it would seem that no farther revelation of the will of God would be necessary. It would be sufficient that each being, acted out, with undeviating precision, the original purpose and design of its existence; and, by so doing, earned, and constantly enjoyed, that kind and degree of happiness for which its nature was adapted.

Of the physical creation this supposition is found to be true. All the parts of nature maintain their several relations, and perform their allotted functions, in perfect concord with one another, and in complete submission to the law of their Creator. Not less perfect and beautiful, we may well believe, is the harmony and concord in the universe of moral Intelligences, which have not fallen from their first estate. These all, with equal regularity, and with far more beauty and grandeur than the unintelligent creation, perform their own appropriate duties, obey their Maker's will, and show forth His glory. And from this cheerful, willing, intelligent service, each one of the innumerable host derives that perfect happiness of which its nature is capable.

The will of the Eternal, thus rendered effective in the harmony, and concord, and beauty, and glory of the Universe, is that all-pervading and immutable law of which Hooker speaks so nobly:—"Of LAW, there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God,—her voice, the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both Angels and Men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all, with uniform consent, admiring her as the Mother of their peace and joy."

In regard to the relations between God and man the reverse of all this beauty of arrangement is found. Here we perceive a fearful separation, a vast hiatus, between the creature, man, and his Almighty Creator. Pride and self-will have made a discordant and painful jar in this glorious harmony. By the disobedience of man, discord, strife, wrath, malice, envy, and every evil work, have entered into the world, spoiling the beautiful work of God, frustrating the purpose of Jehovah, and bringing to an utter destruction the happiness of those who have departed from the heavenly concord. Man, in his natural state, is at variance with his Maker, at variance with himself, at variance with his fellow-man.

He is at enmity with God, because he will not obey the law of God, and therefore he fears, avoids, and tries to forget the Author and the Avenger of that law. He is at enmity with himself, for while he continues in iniquity, and loves to pursue it, his own conscience incessantly rises up within him, tormenting him with remorse, and goading him with the memory and with the consequences of his wickedness and folly. He is at enmity with his fellow-man, for the selfishness of the unrenewed heart induces every one to pursue with greediness his own ends, regardless of the rights, the feelings, and the happiness of others. The whole constitution of human society throughout the world is the emphatic witness to this dissolution of the harmony which God had established in all the relations of humanity. The complicated and expensive machinery of civil government, the armies, the courts, the jails, the penitentiaries; the rivalry, animosities, and cruel conflicts between nations; the forms, and the maxims, and the practices of trade and business; all these things proclaim alike, and in a voice not to be misunderstood, that man is at variance with his fellow-man.

And all this is true now, notwithstanding the fact, that the grace of God has been revealed from heaven, and hath appeared unto all men, for the re-establishment of the broken harmony of the Universe. What then would have been the dreadful condition of humanity if this grace had never been revealed? All who now obey the dictates of unregenerate nature, do so, striving against the Spirit of God given unto them. If this Spirit had never been given, the monstrous wickedness of human nature, thus abandoned to itself, would have rendered the very existence of man upon this earth impracticable. A new revelation of the mercy and grace of God was therefore necessary to make even this world a habitable spot for man.

But this is not all. The violated law of God has its penalty annexed. We see that penalty, in part, in the complicated miseries that fill the world. Every evil passion has its own sting, and is the source of unhappiness. By steeping the soul in mere sensual pursuits, much of the unhappiness attached to evil passions is escaped in this world. But the soul must leave this world of sense, and that it does not continue to live, no man knows or can know. The probabilities are, independent of revelation, that the soul does live after it leaves this world, and will live forever. What then, in that eternal state, is to interpose between the soul and the full penalty of God's broken law? What, in all that eternity, is to avert the misery which we know to be ordained as the consequence of evil passions, and of a perverse and hateful disposition? Nature can give no answer to these questions. Only a new revelation from on high could solve these dark riddles of the human condition. That revelation has been made. It tells us that God himself has interposed between the sinner's soul and the inexorable penalty of the violated law. God

has restored the harmony of creation by a new and more glorious dispensation of grace and mercy. He hath reconciled the world unto Himself in the Man, Christ Jesus.

THE MODE OF THE REVELATION.

This additional revelation from heaven could only be made in one of two ways; either by a direct annunciation from God to each and every human being; or by communicating the revelation to one or more persons, duly commissioned and qualified to impart it to the world, and the fact of their commission so fully authenticated as plainly to declare to human reason that God is the Author of the message. The first method would have been attended with innumerable inconveniences, and with an entire disturbance of the existing order of the human mind and of human society. It has pleased the Almighty, in His infinite wisdom, to adopt the latter method.

CHAPTER II.

THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE.

THE ACTION OF HUMAN NATURE UPON RELIGION.

THE corruption of human nature is abundantly proved by many phenomena of our being. But it is strikingly and mournfully manifested in the history of revealed religion.

The common dealing of man with religion has ever been to corrupt and debase it. This could only be true upon the supposition that the human heart and mind are essentially corrupt.

It is a popular fallacy, that the lowest forms and conceptions of religion are to be found in the infancy of society and of the race. The evidence of history proves, on the contrary, that the nearer you approach, in *time* and *place*, to the origin of the human race, the purer is the religion of the people. An unintended testimony to this fact, was given lately by an infidel writer in the *Westminster Review*, who was obliged to confess, that the religion and morality of the book of Job was nobler, purer, and more refined than the most beautiful speculations of modern philosophy.*

* "In the writer of the Book of Job there is an awful moral earnestness, before which we bend as in the presence of a superior being."
"If we ask ourselves how much during this time has been actually

This popular fallacy about the natural and progressive improvement of religion, is founded upon a comparison of the state of religion among barbarous tribes of men, living far beyond the bounds of civilization, and the state of religion among those same tribes after they had become civilized and cultivated nations. But the comparison proves nothing at all, unless it could be shown that the civilization and religious improvement of these nations proceeded from themselves without external help or prompting. But this fact, so indispensable to the validity of the popular conclusion, has never been shown, even in a single instance. The unvarying testimony of history upon this subject is, that every improvement of the religion of a people has been brought to that people from an external source. The

added to the sum of our knowledge in these matters, what—in all the thousands upon thousands of sermons, and theologies, and philosophies with which Europe has been deluged—has been gained for mankind beyond what we have found in this very book of Job, for instance; how far all this has advanced us in the ‘progress of humanity,’ it were hard, or rather it is easy to answer. How far we have fallen below, let Paley and the rest bear witness; but what moral question can be asked which admits now of a nobler solution than was offered two, perhaps three, thousand years ago.”—*Westminster Review*, for October 1853. p. 233. American edition.

The same writer frequently speaks, with hearty scorn and contempt, of the dogma of “the corruption of humanity,” as “a lie.” But in another part of the same Article he furnishes this strong testimony to the truth he had thus boldly denounced,—“But it seems from our present experience of what—in some, at least, of its modern forms—Christianity has been capable of becoming, that there is no doctrine in itself so pure but what the poorer nature which is in us can disarm and distort it, and adapt it to its own littleness.”

The Article, like many of the writings of its class, has many noble thoughts. The great error, out of which all the capital for infidelity is made by this writer, is the quiet assumption that Calvinism is Orthodox Christianity.

Bible alone tells us whence came that light which has thus been gradually diffused among the nations, civilizing, refining, and elevating them. In every instance it was a distinct revelation from God—that revelation being made fuller and more complete under each dispensation of His Grace, according as it seemed meet to His unsearchable wisdom.

In creating man, God conferred upon him all the gifts that were necessary to his well-being. He gave him, therefore, the true religion—the knowledge of God and of the subsisting relations between God and man. He bestowed this great benefit, as every other, to be used or abused, to be improved and cultivated, or to be deteriorated and lost, as men might determine for themselves, in the exercise of the fearful responsibility thus thrown upon them. The history of the whole human race proclaims the melancholy fact, that men, manifesting in this as in other ways, the malign influence of their own apostacy, have universally corrupted the religion which God revealed. The effect of this corruption has been to make religion, indeed, more popular, more congenial to the natural heart; but at the same time to take away, more or less, according to the extent of the vitiation, the purifying, life-giving, and elevating power of religion. And the true religion has only been preserved, pure and unadulterate, in the world by the continual interposition of the Almighty, co-operating with ordinary human powers by supernatural agencies. For this purpose—to counteract the tendency of men to corrupt the true religion—God has given, in successive ages, prophets, apostles, written revelations, holy sacraments, and a divine society called the Church.

When men wandered away in tribes and families from the early seats of civilization and knowledge, they rapidly

sunk into barbarism; and the religion which they took with them, already corrupted, became more stupid and senseless as they declined in intellectual and moral power. The plan of Divine Providence, for the reclamation of these innumerable wanderers, has been, to send to them, by various human agencies, the truth which He had already revealed.

TENDENCY OF REVEALED RELIGION TO CURE THE CORRUPTION OF NATURE.

That the true religion is intended by its Author, and is, therefore, fitted, to improve, purify, and elevate human nature, is not only proved by the past history of the race, but is comprehensively shown by a single glance at the present condition of the world. Taking the Bible for the standard of Divine Truth, and you will find the moral and intellectual condition of every nation to be in a wonderfully direct proportion to the conformity of its religion to that standard. Human nature is seen to rise or sink in the scale of dignity, purity and power, as the religion of the people approximates, or departs from, the blessed truth revealed in that Holy Word.

Now the acknowledged corruptions of religion are not found in the Bible, and receive no countenance there. Whence came they then, but from that corrupt fountain, the human heart? But religious truth, pure and undefiled, is found in the Bible. As an impure fountain cannot send forth pure waters, whence came this pure unadulterated truth but from God Himself, the Fountain of Eternal Truth?

The fact above mentioned, that the religion of the Bible tends to elevate and perfect human nature is itself an independent proof that this religion is true, and that it came from Him who formed the nature to which it is so beneficently adapted.

THE CORRUPTION OF NATURE A FACT OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The fact of the corruption of human nature is not only shown by the general history of man's dealings with religion, but it is a truth witnessed by the present consciousness of every man who will take the trouble to question himself upon the subject. Every man has aspirations after goodness; he sees and admires moral purity and excellence. But he finds in himself a fearful proclivity to evil, an irreconcilable opposition between himself and God's perfect law. He apprehends and approves the right, but loves and practises the wrong, and is self-condemned in doing so. (Thus both conditions of his own nature are manifested in the consciousness of every human being—his original uprightness and his present apostacy.)

These facts of present consciousness, and of universal observation and experience, are only reiterations of the account which the Bible gives of the creation and fall of man. When therefore the Bible tells us that man was created in the image of God, and that when thus made he was very good; but that by sin he became corrupt, and departed from this goodness, we are compelled to believe this statement, because we have the evidence of both the parts of it within ourselves, and in all human history. It is inscribed upon our own hearts, and seen in the conduct and condition of the whole race. When we visit the extensive

ruins of a great city we are assured at once, by the same inspection, of the two facts, that the noble city once stood there, and that the work of the destroyer has been going on. To repair the ruin into which our nature had fallen required the direct interposition of God our maker. He has graciously interposed to save us from irretrievable and eternal destruction, by the revelation of His truth, by the gift of His Son, by the ministry of His Spirit.

CHAPTER III.

PRESENT ERRORS OF OPINION ON THE SUBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION.

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

In the beginning, God revealed Himself to man as the ONE LORD JEHOVAH, the infinite Source of being and of power. And HE connected the present helpless and corrupted condition of man with a promise of ultimate and complete victory over the evil powers who had introduced falsehood and wrong into the world and into the soul of man. But the light of this first revelation was very faint, compared with that which broke upon the world, when Jesus Christ came to effect His Father's eternal purpose of redeeming man from the power of sin, of Satan, and of hell. He who was the manifested truth, and life, and light of men, established in all its glory and brightness the kingdom of light, in opposition to the kingdom of darkness. This blessed Messiah came "to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." By His advent and death and glorious resurrection, overcoming the world, and conquering death and hell, the gross darkness, the miserable perplexities, in which men in their natural condition are involved, were all dispersed. The meaning

and the gracious end of this earthly economy were clearly shown. Faith, which rests upon the immutability of God—Hope, which has her anchor within the vail, were now fully bestowed upon man, to cheer him in the darkest passages of this changing life; to enable him to use this world as the continued stage of his progress in knowledge, in virtue and in purity; to make him triumphant even over death and the grave; and to prepare him for a destiny commensurate with his divine origin, and with his noble powers, even the eternal companionship of angels, the everlasting presence of God.

But the falsehood which had taken such strong possession of human nature would not permit men to receive in its simplicity the truth which was to make them free. The evil which God has permitted to be in the world, has infected not less the religion revealed from heaven, than all the other workmanship of the Almighty. The impatient wisdom of man has ever loved to array itself against the sublime truth of God. Cain, the first born of the sons of earth, began the work of corruption by denying the doctrine of the atonement, by rejecting for himself the necessity of a sacrificial offering for sin. Others soon declined into the recognition of the Evil Spirit as an independent God. And as the fear of this Evil God was much stronger than the love which warmed the bosoms of men for the bountiful Giver of the blessings which they enjoyed, so it happened that the chief worship and the costliest sacrifices of men were offered to the Devil and his Angels. In the midst of the darkness produced by this wreck of faith, this blindness of the soul, the true light was revealed. Then was the promise fulfilled—"the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the

region and shadow of death light is sprung up." (St. Matt. iv. 16.)

Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the full manifestation of the truth. During all that time the inveterate Adversary of God and man has been unceasingly employed in his old work of trying to convert that truth into a lie: changing by insensible degrees the life-giving truth which makes us free, into the murderous falsehood that sinks the human soul again into the "region and shadow of death." Not the least successful of the arts by which He has sought to effect this purpose has been to persuade good men to try and improve, by addition, by mutilation, by development, or in some other way, the finished and perfect revelation of God. Under the influence of this fatal presumption, the busy intellect and the adventurous fancy of men have been incessantly engaged in corrupting the truth of heaven.

Now in all the religions that are in the world, there is, First, The Truth which God revealed. Secondly, The human changes, additions and corruptions, which have been mixed up with that truth. And because God requires of a creature so nobly endowed as man, a reasonable service—the devotion of the mind as well as of the heart—the appointed discipline and service of the reason in religion is, to discern in this combination of light and darkness, between the Divine and the human, between the true and the false, between the life-giving word of God, and the soul destroying error with which that word has been corrupted.

In most of the nations of the earth the vilest corruptions of religion, engendered in the human heart, and imposed by a cunning priesthood upon illiterate barbarians willing to be thus pleasantly deceived, are so identified with political establishments and with the incorporated wealth of

the nations, that it is almost impossible to remove these corruptions without convulsing and breaking up the whole framework of society. At the same time, the increased facilities of intercourse are carrying into every country the intellectual progress and requirements of the most refined and cultivated nations. The human mind therefore, in the greater part of the world, is getting to be far in advance of the established religions.

ATHEISM, SUPERSTITION, TRANSCENDENTALISM.

This state of things has produced three false and prevalent schools of opinion.

1. A portion of the community in all these countries, Christian and Heathen, has repudiated religion altogether; confounding the true with the false, and rejecting the whole, as the offspring of ignorance, stupidity and fraud.

2. Others are not willing to give up religion. Both for politic motives and for their private comfort, they cling to the established religion. But they hold it as a mere superstition, with which the intellect, the reason of man, has nothing to do. They discharge the intellect from all concern with religion, and from all service to God. Deprecating any attempt to separate the true from the false in religion, as dangerous and impracticable, they passively acquiesce in all the trumpery fables which priestly fraud and popular credulity have in past times engendered.

3. A third party again, refusing like the two former, to exercise the mind which God has given them, in learning to distinguish truth from falsehood, divine revelation from human imposture, and yet feeling the incapacity of man to live without religion, have fallen upon this expedient.

They suppose religion to be exclusively the product of the human mind; an invention or discovery of the soul of man, for its own comfort and contemplation. That each stage of human progress requires a religion elaborated by itself, and adapted to its own powers and capacities. That all the existing forms of religion are therefore obsolete and useless—*effete*, as they term it—and must be replaced by the grander and nobler conceptions of the master spirits of the present generation.

NEGLECT OF BIBLE CHRISTIANITY ONE CAUSE OF THESE
ERRORS.

By all these parties alike, the religion of the Bible has been overlooked and forgotten. The first, or Atheistic party would find, if they would turn to the Bible for instruction, that the drivelling superstitions and the absurd mummeries which have driven them in disgust from the established religion of their country are all denounced and exposed in the Book of eternal life.

The second of these parties, adhering to the popular superstitions without believing them, as a rational being is bound to believe that which he professes, would find in this same record of the wisdom from above, a religion for the mind as well as for the heart, for the intellect as well as for the affections; a religion to satisfy and fill the capacity of the whole man; exercising, enlarging, purifying and ennobling all the powers and faculties of human nature.

The third party, which assumes to be a considerable distance in advance of the rest of mankind, would find in this same despised book, the grandest, the noblest, and the most beautiful of those conceptions which they put forward

as their own, with this striking difference in the mode in which they are presented. The new teachers of the world simply enunciate their thoughts as beautiful abstractions, sublime effusions of the soul. But *these same glorious conceptions* are combined in the Bible with *practical institutions*, which make them a thousand-fold more efficient in their operation upon human nature and upon society, than any mere philosophical dogmas can possibly be. These practical institutions of revealed religion have been the agency by which the truth has been preserved for the use of the world, and conveyed into the minds of the very men, who, while they boast immeasurably of their attainments, despise and traduce the Divine provision from which, indirectly, they derive all the beauty and excellence of their several speculations.

These illuminati strangely forget, that all the falsehoods, blasphemies, and absurdities, which they denounce in the popular religions of the world, are the products of that same human mind to which they appeal as the sole fountain of religious truth; while the noble truths and the sublime conceptions, which they claim as the proud achievement of the enlightened reason of the present day, are to be found pure and unadulterated, in that written revelation from God, which is older than the oldest history of man or of philosophy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY.

The latest development of the atheistical sentiment is contained in the elaborate system put forth by M. Auguste Comte, under the title of Positivism, or the Positive Philosophy.

The sense of a God, a personal Ruler and Judge of men is almost universal. And the desire to throw off the oppressive weight of responsibility resulting from that sense of a personal and just dealing God, is just as universal. The two characteristics belong equally to humanity, and by their joint operation will be found to explain many of its strangest phenomena. Hence the continued recurrence of assaults upon Divine revelation. Hence the necessity for a continued reproduction of the proofs and defences of the truth.

One attempt of human nature to free itself from the pain of this responsibility is the plan of degrading the Divine nature, so that we may have a God tolerant of sin and wickedness, and capable of being appeased by propitiatory sacrifices of the things which men consider valuable. Another way of delivery from the dread of responsibility is, to extinguish in the soul the sense of a God—to deny or ignore his existence. This is done alike by the learned and by the ignorant. Sometimes it is boldly proclaimed

as their own, with this striking difference in the mode in which they are presented. The new teachers of the world simply enunciate their thoughts as beautiful abstractions, sublime effusions of the soul. But *these same glorious conceptions* are combined in the Bible with *practical institutions*, which make them a thousand-fold more efficient in their operation upon human nature and upon society, than any mere philosophical dogmas can possibly be. These practical institutions of revealed religion have been the agency by which the truth has been preserved for the use of the world, and conveyed into the minds of the very men, who, while they boast immeasurably of their attainments, despise and traduce the Divine provision from which, indirectly, they derive all the beauty and excellence of their several speculations.

These illuminati strangely forget, that all the falsehoods, blasphemies, and absurdities, which they denounce in the popular religions of the world, are the products of that same human mind to which they appeal as the sole fountain of religious truth; while the noble truths and the sublime conceptions, which they claim as the proud achievement of the enlightened reason of the present day, are to be found pure and unadulterated, in that written revelation from God, which is older than the oldest history of man or of philosophy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY.

The latest development of the atheistical sentiment is contained in the elaborate system put forth by M. Auguste Comte, under the title of Positivism, or the Positive Philosophy.

The sense of a God, a personal Ruler and Judge of men is almost universal. And the desire to throw off the oppressive weight of responsibility resulting from that sense of a personal and just dealing God, is just as universal. The two characteristics belong equally to humanity, and by their joint operation will be found to explain many of its strangest phenomena. Hence the continued recurrence of assaults upon Divine revelation. Hence the necessity for a continued reproduction of the proofs and defences of the truth.

One attempt of human nature to free itself from the pain of this responsibility is the plan of degrading the Divine nature, so that we may have a God tolerant of sin and wickedness, and capable of being appeased by propitiatory sacrifices of the things which men consider valuable. Another way of delivery from the dread of responsibility is, to extinguish in the soul the sense of a God—to deny or ignore his existence. This is done alike by the learned and by the ignorant. Sometimes it is boldly proclaimed

as the certain conclusion of profound science. At other times it is not by any one openly avowed, but is only secretly entertained, as described by the Psalmist, "in the heart."

The confederated Atheists and Deists of the Eighteenth Century undertook to extinguish Christianity; and near the close of that century they raised a mighty shout of victory, when the French nation solemnly installed a courtesan as the Goddess of Reason, and instituted the worship of this creature as the only religion. This was the issue of the most learned, deliberate, and systematic infidelity that the world has ever seen. That fanaticism of impiety passed away, leaving only the memory of its madness, as an enduring monument of the fatuity of the proudest intellect when arrayed against the glorious Author of universal being.

This furor of rebellion against God was succeeded by an age comparatively religious, in which it was often said that an Atheist is an impossibility. But now again the most comprehensive system of general philosophy ever constructed, deliberately assumes Atheism as its fundamental principle, and its characteristic glory. The great principle of "the Positive Philosophy" of M. Auguste Comte, is the discovery and annunciation of a supposed "law of mental evolution." "This law may be thus stated:—Every branch of knowledge passes successively through three stages. First, The Supernatural or Fictitious. Second, The Metaphysical or Abstract. Third, The Positive or Scientific." "In the attempt made by man to explain the varied phenomena of the universe, history reveals to us therefore three distinct and characteristic stages—the Theological, the Metaphysical, and the Positive. In the first man explains phenomena by some fanciful conception sug-

gested in the analogies of his own consciousness." "In the third he explains phenomena by adhering solely to these constancies of succession and co-existence ascertained inductively, and recognized as the laws of nature. In the Theological stage nature is regarded as the theatre whereon the arbitrary wills and momentary caprices of Superior powers play their varying and variable parts. In the Positive stage the invariableness of phenomena under similar conditions is recognized as the sum total of human investigation; and beyond the laws which regulate phenomena it is considered idle to penetrate." The Positive Philosophy therefore divides all human knowledge into "Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Physiology and Sociology."

I have given this synopsis of the system in the words of one of its most enthusiastic adherents, in order that my readers may see with what imposing gravity, and with what high sounding words, learned men will put together elaborate absurdities, when they undertake to war against God. We have only to take the very principles of these men, and we will see that the same rule of philosophizing which drives the eternal God from the world He has created, would equally annihilate the sciences into which they divide all human knowledge.

The Positive Philosopher will only deal with phenomena. But how does he know that there are any phenomena beyond himself to deal with? All that he primarily knows is his own consciousness, his sensations, thoughts and volitions. But how does he get beyond himself to know that he is surrounded by other beings, of like passions and powers with his, to be the subject of his science of Sociology? He can only arrive at that knowledge by a law of his own nature, *a principle of belief*, by which he refers certain states of his own consciousness to an external cause;

to a cause, *varying with the consciousness, and adequate to its production.* In this way he is assured of the existence of human beings, having sensitive, designing and reflective minds, like his own; and forthwith, he classifies the phenomena, to the knowledge of which he is thus brought, by a law of belief, under the name of the Science of Sociology.

By the very same law of belief, *we refer our consciousness of our own existence* to an external Cause, a CAUSE *adequate to the production of such an effect*—to a Creator, to a God.

So of all the other sciences. The Positive Philosopher refers his varying states of consciousness to adequate and appropriate external causes, and so constructs, out of the phenomena thus recognized, his science of Astronomy, Chemistry, &c. The universal sense of humanity refers the Universe, and each of its parts, to an adequate-external Cause, to an all-designing and all-powerful Cause, and so constructs the Science of Theology. It is precisely the same process in both cases. It is the same law of belief by which we attain any knowledge beyond our own consciousness. Our intellectual and scientific knowledge of God, therefore, independent of the moral sense, is just as certain, and founded upon the very same basis, as our knowledge of Sociology, Astronomy, Physics, or Chemistry.

Thus perishes the last and most elaborate effort of philosophic folly to deprive the world of its Maker—to drive out the Almighty from the knowledge of men. The effort proves that it is only “the fool” who “hath said in his heart,” or with his lips, “There is no God.”

CHAPTER V.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

SUCH AS RESULT FROM THE LIMITED POWERS OF THE
HUMAN MIND, AND CANNOT BE REMOVED.

THE difficulties of Christianity, which cause so many complaints, are of two classes, both of which are found in every other branch of human knowledge. One of these classes springs from those necessary limits which bound the knowledge of a finite mind when inquiring into the counsels of the Infinite God. These difficulties can never be removed, while the distance between finite and infinite remains. The only wonder here is, that those who are willing enough to sit down in contented ignorance of ten thousand mysteries of their own nature and being, should refuse to believe any thing in the mighty work of human redemption, which may not be grasped by their own feeble intellect.

So much of the constitution of universal nature is placed within the range of our knowledge as is necessary or useful for the practical conduct of human life. But this is only a part of the great system of things. To whatever point we turn, therefore, inquiry reaches a limit where there must seem to be incompleteness, imperfection. There is

something wanting to join to that which is last discovered, in order to make it consistent and proportionate. But that something we cannot see. It is beyond us. We strain our mental vision in vain to find some traces of the broken connection; but we can discover only an infinite void. This same result would occur, however large the sweep, however wide the range of our faculties, unless we were so constituted as to take in the infinite knowledge of the Infinite Mind.

So it is precisely in the sphere of Divine revelation. God has revealed just what is necessary to the perfect development of the spiritual life, and no more. He has revealed His own intimate nature—the adorable mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons in One God—because these Persons of the Godhead sustain to us distinct relations, and perform for us distinct offices in the economy of redemption. The recognition of these Persons in the Divine Unity was, therefore, necessary to men, in order that the subjects of redemption might intelligently co-operate with God in the great work of salvation. But no more is revealed in regard to this, or any other mystery of religion, than is required by the actual exigencies of human condition. In revelation, as in nature, therefore, there must be, on every side, a limit which balks our inquiries, and which presents to us seeming imperfection and inconsistency. How idle, then, are the cavils of those who object against this revelation from heaven, not because it is insufficient for our guidance and direction in the path-way of life, but because there are difficulties in it which they cannot comprehend or reconcile; because it is incomplete as a whole; because it is not all which the Divine Mind must know!

DIFFICULTIES WHICH MUST BE REMOVED, AND WHICH
SERVE AS A PROPER DISCIPLINE OF THE HEART AND
MIND.

The second class of difficulties belonging to Christianity not only may, but must be overcome. They are similar to those which stand in the way of every acquisition that is useful and valuable to man. They meet us in earliest infancy and accompany us in every path to which we turn for knowledge and instruction. They are a part of the appointed discipline of our minds and bodies in this world of probation. Would it not be a strange anomaly in the dealings of God with men, if a knowledge of Christianity could be acquired without labor, and pains, and difficulty, when the acquisition of any other knowledge requires all these? The Creator demands the homage of our whole being, of our intellectual powers as well as of our affections; and an important part of the devotion of the Mind to His service consists in the active and diligent exercise of intelligence in finding out the truth which He has revealed for the salvation of men. When God places within our reach the means of knowledge, and requires us to use those means, He has treated us according to our nature, and in correspondence with all the analogies of our being and circumstances.

All that is required of any man in this search after truth, is the honest devotion to that search, of such mind and opportunity as each one possesses. "The wayfaring man though a fool," can attain all necessary assurance on this subject, by using faithfully his limited powers and opportunities. But the man of learning and ability, must as faithfully employ the whole of his superior endowments

in the same inquiry. This is a beautiful instance of that unvarying rule of the Divine economy, "To whom much is given, of him will much be required."

THE PROOF OF CHRISTIANITY NOT MATHEMATICAL AND
DEMONSTRATIVE, BUT MORAL AND PERSUASIVE.

The mere intellectual recognition of religious truth can never go beyond the perception of a large balance of probabilities in its favor. The evidences of Christianity do not impose upon men a physical necessity of believing, but a moral obligation to believe, as they are reasonable and prudent creatures, capable of weighing and determining the balance of probabilities, and sufficiently inclined to secure their own welfare as affected by those probabilities. God has so constituted the economy of the world and our relation to it, that the whole conduct of human life is governed by these probabilities. All the business of life, and every undertaking to which men commit their fortune and their happiness, have but this security—the balance of probabilities. God deals with us as religious beings in this same way. He treats us as reasonable creatures, *competent*, and therefore *bound*, to entertain, to decide, and to act upon probabilities.

The Christian revelation is authenticated only by moral evidence, sufficient to produce a high degree of probability. And this same remark is true of each part of that revelation,—of each one of the doctrines of Christianity, as distinguished from its corruptions and perversions. The probability thus produced, connected with the immensity of the interests at stake, is enough to determine the conduct of a rational being. No matter how slight the prob-

ability, if it is all on one side, that is sufficient to put a reasonable and responsible creature under an obligation to be guided by it. But God has been pleased to furnish sufficient evidence of the Christian revelation to make the probability of its truth only a little short of absolute certainty. Therefore the obligation to act upon such a probability is proportionably increased.

This statement of the effect of Christian evidence relates only to the first intellectual recognition of the truth. God does not leave His obedient children to rest always in these reasonable probabilities, however strong they may seem to be. According to the settled economy of the dispensation of grace, it is provided that those who honestly fulfil their obligations as rational and free creatures, by doing the things which the weight of probability imposes upon them, shall, by that very action, be rewarded with an increasing conviction of the truth; and as they persevere in this obedience, their faith and their hope, which were but as the grain of mustard seed, shall be changed into a firm and impregnable assurance. "If any man will *do* His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." St. John vii. 17.

In this Divine provision, the system of revealed religion is seen to be in intimate correspondence and in close analogy with the entire scheme of God's Providential government of the world. Men are compelled to consult and exercise their reason in adjusting the balance of probabilities, in regard to every action of their lives. And they must act at their peril upon the result of this inquiry. There is no such thing as certainty in the inception of any human enterprise. But when men do act wisely, by the direction of this intelligent weighing of probabilities, then assurance—certainty of right—ultimately and inevitably

follows. The issue of our conduct is the only demonstration of its policy. So it is precisely in religion. And this is one proof that the God of Providence is the Author of the Christian revelation.

The final issue, indeed, of our religious hopes and expectations will only be in the fruitions of eternity. But even in this life there is vouchsafed to every child of God an earnest of his inheritance, a foretaste of the joys that are to be hereafter. This is found by those who believe and *do* the will God, in that entire adaptation of the truths of Christian religion to the necessities of nature, to the higher aspirations of the soul, and to the exigencies of this mortal state, which brings a daily strengthening assurance that as we are from God, so this truth is from Him. Human nature and Christian truth are felt to be of common origin, for they are intimately bound together—the one the complement of the other, necessary to its right working, to its highest development, to the accomplishment of its purpose in the universe of being. The result of this increasing assurance is that peace of God which passeth understanding—the precious heritage of God's people here—the sweet earnest of the joy that is to be in His presence forever.

/ If men refuse thus to prove the doctrine of Christ, by acting upon the reasonable probabilities which they see and acknowledge; if they determine to do in religion as they dare not and cannot do in regard to any earthly interest; if they decline to be guided by enlightened reason in doing that which is seen to be best; if they persist in dictating to the Almighty the terms on which they will believe religious truth, while they willingly acquiesce in His mode of authenticating all other truth; if they continue to insist that God shall substitute a mathematical

demonstration of Christianity for the moral evidence which He has been pleased to give, then they can never rise beyond the region of speculation and doubt in religion. While in this state the conclusions of their processes of reasoning will be no conclusions at all; for they will be obliged to search after them, again and again, by a repetition of the same fatiguing circle. Thus, at the best, they can but realize the description of an Apostle, "ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth." But this is not the worst result of this experiment. Doubt and uncertainty, changing convictions—"tossed about with every wind of doctrine"—make an uncomfortable and a painful state of mind. It is, therefore, readily and almost certainly exchanged for apathy and indifference to religion, a cold, irreligious, and practically atheistic state. This is the common issue of the difficulties of religion, when those difficulties are not rationally and manfully met, as all similar difficulties are, by practically testing the truth of that which comes to us commended by high and imposing testimonies, as the way of life—the way of salvation.

AN OBJECTION FOUNDED ON THE SUPPOSED NATURE OF BELIEF.

X A popular objection to Christianity is, the allegation that it is unjust to require faith as the condition of salvation, because a man's belief is not under his own control, and he cannot believe as he pleases.

In one sense the proposition here affirmed is true, and in another it is false; and the juggle of the sophism consists in confounding together the true and the false sense, as if they were identical. It is true that belief cannot be deter-

mined simply by the will; we cannot believe altogether as we please. But it is also true that belief is controlled by evidence. And it is false to suppose that any one, to whom Christianity has been proposed, cannot bring to bear upon his mind sufficient evidence of its truth to influence and compel his belief,—*unless the will interpose a barrier to the legitimate effect of that evidence.* It is the confounding together this falsehood and that truth, which makes the whole force of the objection we are examining.

A man may believe that the moon is only two feet in diameter, and that the earth is stationary and does not revolve. In the present state of his knowledge, he may be obliged to believe this. But if he has the opportunity of better information, and refuses to avail himself of it, his ignorance and his consequent erroneous belief are voluntary. A man may very firmly believe that he has a right to take the life of his injurious neighbor by secret assassination. But it is his duty to know better, because he has the means of knowing better. His wrong belief, therefore, founded on his voluntary ignorance, is itself voluntary and criminal, and if it should lead to a corresponding act, would be justly punished by Divine and human laws.

These and other examples, of a like kind, will show the distinction between the truth and the falsehood of the proposition, that belief is independent of the will, and that it is unjust to charge a man with criminality on account of his belief. God has placed within the reach of all to whom the Gospel is preached, sufficient proof of the mission of the Redeemer of the world. This is a subject which deeply concerns us as the creatures of God, and which relates to our destiny as immortal beings. It is, therefore, our highest duty to understand it well, to know, and to believe the truth. The means of information are

before us, and have only to be honestly employed to influence and control belief. It is true that the minds of men are very variously constituted with regard to this matter of belief. Some persons are naturally sceptical, and others very credulous. These different classes will, of course, require very different degrees of evidence in order to induce their belief of the truth. But for the most incredulous, ample evidence of Christian truth is provided, if they will seek for and consider it with an honest and an impartial will.

This proposition is thus distinctly made, subject to the qualifications already considered; that the evidence of Christianity is not mathematical and demonstrative, but moral and persuasive. It is sufficient to produce such a high degree of probability, as to put every reasonable person under an obligation to try it. Experience is the only demonstration of this, as of all other moral truth. If men will faithfully discharge the highest obligations of their own nature, they will learn, believe, and obey the truth, and thus secure the great salvation which the truth reveals. If, on the contrary, they disregard these obligations, if they spurn at the knowledge which their Maker graciously condescends to impart, they will remain in voluntary ignorance of that which it most concerns them to know, and will justly perish in unbelief. X

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL NATURE OF THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

GOD has furnished the highest possible moral evidence of the truth which He requires us to believe. The whole of that evidence has been collected and ably presented in numerous professed works upon the Evidences of Christianity. Some one or more of these should be studied by those who wish to be fully instructed on this all-important subject. We can only indicate here the nature of a portion of this evidence. It is ample to vindicate to the honest inquirer the truth of God, and to enable him to discriminate that truth from all specious imitations of it, from all its corruptions, from all impostures.

THE PRESENT EXISTENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, PROVES HISTORICALLY ITS ALLEGED EARTHLY ORIGIN.

The first, the most palpable, and the most prominent of all the testimonies to the truth of Christianity is the Christian Church. The Church, existing as an organized body in all the world, and composed of so many different nations and races of men, carries us up to its own alleged origin in the life, and works, and writings, and institutions of Christ and his Apostles, with much greater force of evidence than the present existence of Mahomedanism carries us to Mahomed as its author. Yet the evidence, in the latter case, is so

overwhelming, that no one ever suggested a doubt upon the subject. The "Church of the Latter Day Saints" inevitably concludes Joe Smith as its founder, and the legend of the "Golden Plates" as its origin. If you take hold of one link of this chain—the present existence of that people—and go backward, you are compelled to reach the other. So, the actual existence of Methodism leads us, of necessity, back to John Wesley. Popery, as distinct from the religion described to us in the Bible, takes us up to the time and occasion when each of its portentous corruptions was fastened upon Christianity. All things have a beginning, and every beginning a cause, adequate to the production of the phenomenon. Take the smallest Christian society now to be found in one of our smallest villages. Find out its beginning. Trace it back to the origin of its belief, its institutions, its sacred books, and you will inevitably be led to Christ and His apostles, living and preaching in Judea, as the only possible solution of the phenomenon.

THE PRESENT EXISTENCE OF JUDAISM PROVES HISTORICALLY ITS ALLEGED EARTHLY ORIGIN.

So, look at the Jewish people, at any period of their long and eventful history, when they constituted a nation, a body politic, in Canaan; or now, as we see them, scattered over the earth. You can only account for their existence, their usages, their laws, and institutions, by going back to Moses and the Exodus. All things have a beginning. Find the Jews where you will, subsequent to the time when they were led out of Egypt, and you find them in possession of the Decalogue, the Pentateuch, the Passover, Circumcision, and the greater part of that elaborate ritual which is recorded in their sacred books. When and how did these things and this people begin? We are not talk.

ing now of myths, and demi-gods, and of fabulous ages, celebrated by the writers of the civilized era. We are speaking of plain, palpable facts—facts patent, notorious, and which must be accounted for in some rational way. We are speaking of the existence of a mighty people, dispersed throughout the world, and wonderfully distinguished from all other people by certain laws, customs, institutions, and writings. Can you rationally account for the existence and condition of this people, for their customs and institutions, except by admitting the general truth of their own well preserved history; and, by this simple clue, tracing back the people and their institutions to an adequate beginning—an origin sufficient to account for the actual phenomena? The history of England gives a reasonable account of the present condition and institutions of the people of England. You might just as well deny the whole of that history, and allege that it is all the fabrication of some London wits of the last century, as to deny the Jewish history. In the former case you would leave the present condition and institutions of England to be contemplated as a mere accident, a fortuitous conjunction of present circumstances; or else a stupendous miracle of Almighty power, instantly exerted. To the same alternatives precisely is the infidel shut up, who gratuitously rejects the plain historical record which the Jews present of their origin and their institutions.

A man might choose to say that there never was a Declaration of American Independence, or a war of Independence, or such a man as General Washington; that these were mere myths of the fabulous age of the Republic, originated within a few years past; and that the whole people of the United States, of the present generation, had concurred in the fraud of celebrating the 4th of July as the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence,

and in ante-dating their constitution and laws, so as to correspond with this fable; and in testifying that they had received their institutions, and this national commemoration, from their fathers! The same man might add to this most ridiculous of all stories this further marvel, that a great many of the neighboring nations, in order to gratify the national vanity of the present race of Americans, had agreed to change and interpolate their own historical records, for the purpose of sustaining the fabulous account of the 4th of July, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, and the life and character of George Washington!

This extravagant fiction would be no more gratuitous and unsustained than the infidel assertion, that the Jews at any subsequent period of their national history, joined all together in the impossible fraud of celebrating the Passover, as an institution handed down from their fathers in commemoration of the Exodus, when in fact there had previously been no such institution, and no such fact, to be commemorated. But the supposed fraud about the Passover is only one of a thousand more, equally impossible, which the infidel hypothesis charges upon a whole generation of people. There is the entire Pentateuch to be accounted for, with all its elaborate ritual, and its peculiar customs, entering into the daily social life, and forming the character of the whole people. And then there is the concurrence of other nations in this fraud. For whenever the contemporary history of neighboring states brings us into contact with the Jews, we find them just the people, with just the customs and institutions represented in their own consistent and connected historical books. Besides all this extravagance of infidel conjecture, there is this remarkable feature to be added. The infidel gets up this utterly impossible fiction on the part of the Jewish people,

not that they may thus expensively laud and magnify themselves, but that they may record, for all future time, innumerable instances of their own infamy; and that they may furnish the strongest testimony to the truth of a religion which they abhor.

INFIDEL OBJECTION.

Now what is the ground of objection to the Jewish historical record, which does not apply equally to the American, the English and the Greek? Simply this—that the first contains a record, along with the national history, of miracles performed and prophecies uttered. In other words, the Jewish history professes to contain the history of a revelation from God. The infidel wishes to discredit the fact of such a revelation. To do this he first undertakes to discredit the historical record in which the alleged fact is contained. But his great argument for discrediting the historical record is, that it does contain this fact; that it professes to relate miracles and prophecies; and these, it is alleged, make the entire narrative incredible. That is, the whole infidel argument is a begging of the question. He assumes all that he wanted to prove—that a revelation is impossible—and then, very unnecessarily, uses that assumption as the basis of a learned historical argument to discredit the record in which a professed revelation is contained. But if the first assumption be granted, the argument based upon it is superfluous and trifling. For if a revelation be impossible, then it is idle to be testing the fact of a revelation by the credibility of any national record. / As this assumption is not granted, let it be proved, and the whole question is at an end. Let it be satisfactorily determined that the Almighty Maker cannot commu-

nicate His will to His intelligent creatures, and all further argument may be dispensed with as gratuitous and impertinent.

THAT A RELIGION THUS HISTORICALLY PROVED IS FROM GOD, MUST BE CONCLUDED FROM OTHER CONCURRENT EVIDENCE.

Moses and the Pentateuch then, are a necessary historical conclusion from the present or any past condition of the Jewish people. Christ and His Apostles, are a necessary historical conclusion from the present existence and institutions of the Christian Church. This inevitable conclusion does not, however, of itself determine the Divine authority, either of Judaism or of Christianity. That point has to be ascertained by other sources of proof.

In referring briefly to the nature of this additional evidence, I will allow to the objector all that he can claim with regard to the caution with which such testimony should be received. I will acknowledge that there has been more falsehood and imposture, current in the world on this subject than on any other. That men are very liable to be deceived, and very apt to be deceivers, in regard to this matter of religion. It is certain that the mere pretence of working miracles will not be sufficient, by itself, to authenticate a revelation. For all history concurs with what we call the word of God, in testifying, that the Devil and evil men will endeavor by "lying wonders" to deceive and seduce the people.

Recollect, however, that it has been shown, that religion is a necessity of man's nature. Necessary to personal comfort. Necessary to social order and to social progress. Necessary to all right development of human nature. It

has been shown also that the mere operation of man upon religion, so far as we can historically trace his hand, has been to deprave and corrupt it, by changes and additions, from which enlightened reason revolts. It has been seen, also, that the acceptance and currency of a counterfeit presupposes a true and genuine production of the same kind: Much more does an acknowledged corruption demonstrate the previous existence of the pure truth which has been thus tainted.

Now if we can show a religion professedly received by revelation from God, which commends itself as good and holy and pure, not merely to the common mind, but to the cultivated reason and to the elevated sentiment of the most enlightened men: if the whole tendency of this religion, enemies and friends alike being judges, is to make those who honestly receive and practise it, pure, noble and God-like: if the intelligence, social progress, and moral elevation of every nation, is in direct proportion to its hearty reception of that religion in its purity: and if the monuments and the pure ethics of that religion have come to us from the very infancy of manhood, when all else exhibited only the earliest stages of society—the first beginnings of individual and of natural progress—we have laid a foundation for the reception of this religion as true, as a genuine revelation from God, which distinguishes it utterly from every false religion that has ever prevailed in the world.

But God designs to satisfy fully the reason of the creature to whom He has given reason, in regard to the religion which he must receive and obey. He accumulates His testimonies to the truth, so that there shall be no excuse, but wilfulness or inattention, either to rest in a false religion, or to refrain from embracing the true.

At a very early stage of this revelation, God was pleased,

as a means of attesting it to all people and to all times, to set up a visible kingdom in the world, whose existence as a social body was derived from the revelation, and depended upon it. To this people he committed the task of reducing the revelation to writing, and preserving it in that form forever. To them also He gave numerous ritual and social institutions, of constant and perpetual observance, witnessing the same revelation, and the miracles by which it had been authenticated, and showing forth, in symbol and acted representation, its most important features. The Book containing the revelation contained also the whole history of the people to whom it was given; the time and occasion of its delivery; the miracles by which it was attested; and a minute account of the institutions by which both the miracles and the revelation they witnessed were to be preserved in perpetual memory. The revelation was not all made at one time, but at varied intervals, the record of each revelation being but a substantive part of the continuous historical record of this visible kingdom, which God had chosen to be the depository and the witness of this revealed truth.

A part of the revelation thus made from time to time, and incorporated into the national record, at the respective times when each portion was given, consists of prophecies. These prophecies, taken together, constitute a minute history of the chosen people in whose sacred books they are found, and a general history of the world at large, in connection with that people. The predictions are sometimes of a religious, sometimes of a civil and political character. They refer to the most trivial circumstances, and to the most imposing and solemn events in the history of mankind. In each class of predictions alike the fulfilment has been exact, perfect and complete. Jesus Christ is the principal

burden of prophecy, as of all Scripture. But in addition to all that was foretold of Him, these prophecies comprise a general account of the Church and of the world, intermingled with minute specifications of particulars, so exactly fulfilled, as to fill up the measure of the most importunate inquiry. The history of different nations presents to us the certain record of the fulfilment of a number of these predictions. But as many of them relate to events which have occurred in successive ages, so each generation of people, witnessing the fulfilment, has received for itself an independent testimony—the direct attestation of the Almighty—that the revelation contained in these writings is truly the word of Him who knew all events, because He was God over all.

This literal fulfilment of the prophecies, in so many minute as well as grand and imposing particulars, thus defying all human calculation of chances, has forced the deniers of revelation to declare that the prophecies were written after the fulfilment. We have seen already that these prophecies were a part of the national archives of a distinct and noted people. They are inseparably mingled with their history, and with their national monuments, so that, if you take away the prophecy, you must blot out their history with it; for they are part and parcel of the same transaction, and are integral portions of the same record. If you undertake to blot out the history of the Jewish and Christian communities, then you must efface the history of the whole world. For by the Providence of God it was ordered, that the Jewish community first, and the Christian afterward, should be so connected with the principal nations of the earth, that the history of these nations must necessarily involve the contemporary recognition of these communities. Doubtless the designed effect

of this arrangement was to subject the truth of the Bible to a tangible and never failing test, which might at all times be applied. For the history, ancient and modern, of the people to whom the oracles of God were committed—the Israel of old; and the Christian Church—was a thing patent to all the world. That history flowed along continuously with the world's history; and was indissolubly connected, at innumerable points, with the history of the most important and most conspicuous of the nations of the earth. So that, at all times, an honest inquirer after truth could look back upon the history of mankind, and verify the records of the Bible.

All authentic history, as far back as it goes, synchronizes with the Bible history, and furnishes ample confirmation of its truth. But the Bible record goes far beyond the oldest authentic histories; and, until lately, the only historical confirmation of its facts in that higher antiquity, was the entire correspondence of those facts with the actual condition of nations at the dawn of profane authentic history. | But in our own day the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments have been found to verify many of those antecedent facts stated in the Bible—facts which transpired long before the date of any other extant history except the Bible itself. | Thus the missing links in the chain of *aliunde* testimony to the Bible have been wonderfully supplied at this late period. The interweaving, therefore, of prophecy with the history of the visible kingdom which God has set up in the world, and of that history with the history of the world, forms a firm contexture, a single web, out of which you can take no part without involving the destruction of the whole. It is proved, therefore, that the prophecies were delivered at the respective times when they profess to have been given, and when they became a part

of the official record of the people to whom they were committed.

The only answer that can be given to this, is the same begging of the whole question already mentioned—the allegation that a prophecy is an impossibility. So, to human power is the creation of a world; and yet the world exists. So, to human power is the creation of the smallest insect; and yet there are myriads of these in the very air we breathe and in the water we drink. The question is as to the fact of the interposition of the Creator of worlds, and of the Creator of man in human affairs. The possibility of such an interposition is self-evident. Now, then, we have proved that certain prophecies were incorporated in the national records of the professed people of God long antecedent to their alleged fulfilment. Whether these prophecies were uttered from the inspiration of the Almighty, is another question, to be determined by a comparison of the prophecies with their fulfilment; and by their connection with those concurrent proofs of a revelation from God, with which He has been pleased to meet and satisfy the reason of His intelligent creatures.

The authenticity of the Jewish history, and, consequently, of the prophecies it contains, is conclusively established in another way.

Five hundred and thirty-six years before the Advent of Christ—in whom so many of the prophecies, and all the types and shadows of the law, were fulfilled—the language in which they were written had become a dead language. The great body of the exiles who returned from the Babylonish captivity spoke only the Chaldaic dialect; and, therefore, when Ezra would read the Scriptures to the people he was compelled to appoint interpreters, to render it, verse by verse, into the tongue with which they were

familiar. These records thenceforth existed, in the old and dead Hebrew language, and in the common Chaldee dialect, in which it was heard and memorized by the Jews, and into which it was subsequently committed to writing in the form of regular versions. We are therefore forced to refer the composition of these national records to a period antecedent to the loss of the ancient language in which they were composed.

Again, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, two hundred and seventy-seven years before Christ, these same Scriptures were translated into Greek, then the prevailing language of the civilized world, and of all the polite literature of the time. This version was used by the Jews of Alexandria in their synagogues, and by other Jews in different cities of Asia and Europe, and was thus almost universally diffused. This translation has been known and used by different nations from that time to the present.

Besides all this, the mongrel population transported into Samaria by the Assyrian kings, during the Babylonish captivity, adopted in part the Jews' religion, and caused a version of the five books of Moses to be made into their own dialect. This version they religiously preserved during the many centuries of bitter and rancorous hostility between the Jews and themselves; and this version a feeble remnant of that people still retains. Thus did the Providence of God ordain that the history of revelation should touch the history of the human mind and of human progress at innumerable points; and that the Scriptures of truth should come down to us authenticated beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt.

ALL THESE PROOFS MEET TOGETHER IN THE DIVINITY OF
CHRIST.

X This mighty preparation in the ages preceding, this extended scheme of prophecy, fulfilled and fulfilling, the national history, and the elaborate ritual of the sacred books of the chosen people of God, and the Providential government of the world, all pointed to one great event in the history and condition of the human race—the mission of the Son of God to be the Redeemer of man. To this pointed all the ages before. Back to this event all succeeding ages will refer to the consummation of time. Around it is involved the world's history. The progress of society and the revolutions of empires receive their only adequate meaning when viewed as the preparation for this great fact. The institutions and the opinions of mankind in every form of religion, false and true, point to this fact as their only satisfactory solution. The one Sacrifice upon Calvary, long before it was made, was showed forth with one consentient witness, by every race, and tribe, and kindred of men upon ten thousand times ten thousand altars, reeking with the ineffectual blood of immolated victims. The same all-sufficient Sacrifice of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world is yet more distinctly showed forth by the unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine, which, upon every Christian altar, has been continually offered up by the innumerable hosts of every clime, who, for 1800 years, have professed the Christian name.

The meaning of this glorious redemption is, the salvation of man from the condemnation due to sin, his rescue from the dominion of the devil, and from the power of corrupt nature, and his restoration to the freedom of a child of

God. To accomplish this purpose of infinite beneficence, to redeem from slavery, pollution, and death a creature so nobly endowed as man, called forth an expression of Divine love at which the Universe is amazed, and bends in adoring wonder and gratitude. Here occurs that stupendous "mystery of Godliness" which it is so hard to understand and realize. To reinstate man in the glorious freedom of his primeval nature, when he subsisted in the unimpaired image of his Creator, was not to be a simple act of Omnipotence. This would have been treating man as a part of the physical or brute creation. His will was corrupted and enslaved, and this must be made free by some method consonant to the nature and prerogative of so Divine a faculty. Infinite love alone could solve this complicated problem. The Almighty did it. God Himself, the Eternal Son, assumed the fallen and captive nature He would redeem. In that nature, and for it, conquered, not only flesh and blood, not merely the hurtful lusts of despoiled and degraded humanity, but also the spiritual powers that had wrought this ruin, and by the foulness of their dominion produced these lusts. Jesus Christ, in our nature and for us, overcame the conqueror of man, carrying captivity captive, triumphing over the evil powers, and making a show of them openly. As a consequence of this victory, and to complete its purpose, the same conquering Saviour has given to all the subjects of this redemption His Holy Spirit, in such sufficient measure as to enable every one to break loose from the sad bondage of sin and Satan, and to choose anew the liberty of the children of God.

RAPID SKETCH OF THE EARLY PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

It has been well said that the greatest miracle connected with the institution of Christianity is Christendom. Nothing short of Divine power, working in the appointed human instrumentalities, could have accomplished the firm establishment of Christian faith on the ruins of all previous religions. The working of this Divine power was externally manifested in many signs and wonders which accompanied the publication of the Gospel. But if we had no account of these at all, or if, with a class of German writers, we were to reject altogether the recorded miracles of Scripture, we would yet be compelled to see and recognize the operation of a Divine power, producing the result which Christendom attests now, and has attested to every generation of men since the days of the Apostles.

At the coming of Christ the mind of the world was completely possessed by three prevailing modes of thought, feeling and action, in regard to religion. The first was a degenerate Judaism, which was the religion of the Old Testament, modified by the accumulated traditions of many generations. The second was Heathenism, which was the ancient Patriarchal religion, utterly corrupted and debased by the foulest admixtures of human ignorance and fraud. The third was learned or Philosophic Infidelity.

When Christianity went forth to the encounter with these three great powers it had but one human element of success. Against Judaism it appealed to the Old Testament, and showed that the new revelation was the fulfilment of the preparatory system therein contained, the substance of the mighty shadow which so many ages had

beheld with wondering awe. In assailing the strongholds of Heathenism, Christianity could draw upon those fundamental truths of the Patriarchal dispensation, to which the human heart and mind had always responded, and the salutary force of which, not all the defilement of human and satanic ingenuity had been able entirely to destroy. Even the cold skepticism which doubted about everything, and cared not for any truth, might be successfully attacked, by penetrating to the depth of the unbeliever's soul and striking chords of feeling there, which would cause him to turn from his heartless system with disappointment and disgust.

God works in this world through earthly instrumentalities. Therefore the human element of success, which has been just described, and all others that subsequently arose, were fully and faithfully employed by the inspired teachers of the truth. But that these would have been entirely inefficient, without the accompanying energy of Divine power, will be apparent to all who will examine the circumstances of the case.

1. Christianity was simple truth, offering not one worldly inducement for its profession, but, on the contrary, opposing itself to all the evil actions of men, and to every wrong desire of the human heart; that is, to the whole force and bent of unrenewed nature.

2. The falsehoods of the prevalent Judaism were identified with the strongest feelings of the soul—patriotism, national pride, inordinate self-esteem, contempt of others, personal ambition and religious bigotry.

3. Heathenism was consecrated by the sanctions of an immemorial antiquity. Some of its principles were coeval with the birth of man, and found an undoubted response in the nature of every human being. The cor-

ruptions of this religion were gradual accretions, skillfully adapted to the vicious propensities and to the weaknesses of the human heart. It therefore allowed free scope to the indulgence of passion, with no other restraint than the necessities of social life demanded. The strongest hold of this corrupt system upon the human mind arose from the wide separation which it made between *Vice* and *Impiety*. Under it a man might be very vicious and yet very pious, very strict and devout in his observance of all the duties of religion. The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, instead of being restrained and subdued, were in a large measure sanctioned and consecrated by religion. Men could yield to the solicitation of corrupt inclination with a comfortable sense of the Divine favor and approbation.

Again, Paganism was identified with the civil state in every country. A new Deity might, with more or less facility, be added to the list of acknowledged Gods, without affecting the administration of the civil government. But all the ordinary operations of peace and war, required the constant recognition and worship of the Gods actually acknowledged by the State. Not only was Paganism thus identified with the civil State, but it was intimately incorporated with the social condition of every people. The Priesthood was numerous, powerful, and closely connected with every rank of society. Vast numbers of tradespeople and artisans were dependent upon the national religion for the profit of their respective occupations: while the remains of the victims continually offered in sacrifice, furnished subsistence to a considerable portion of the population.

4. A large and constantly increasing class of persons, in the more civilized parts of the world, had learned to despise the fables and the superstitions of the popular religion.

The minds of these men, thus unmoored from the stable rock of religious faith, found no relief in the prevailing systems of philosophy. These were too vague, uncertain, changeable and contradictory to inspire confidence, or to command respect. They were content, therefore, with a cold and heartless denial that there is any religious truth, and with an outward conformity to the popular religion, as a venerable and useful enginery of the State. To ask the attention of these men to a new system of religious truth was but to provoke the smile of pity or of scorn. With these facts before us, how false and foolish appears the modern conceit that religious truth has ever been the simple product of the unaided human mind!

Such were the forces against which Christianity was compelled to engage at its very first proposal. And with what instruments did it undertake the encounter? Twelve illiterate men, from the lowest ranks of a despised nation, professing to rehearse the teachings of a man who had been crucified as a malefactor, commence this astounding enterprise; and they were successful. The oracles were silenced; the Priests were put to shame; the temples were deserted; the sacrifices despised; and all the civilized world, and many barbarous nations, confessed The Crucified as the ONLY GOD.

SUCCESS NO TEST OF TRUTH.

X Do not understand me as advocating the general proposition, that Success is a test of truth. Success, in religion, is much more likely to be a test of falsehood. Paganism and Mahomedanism can claim the value of this test, whatever it proves, much more eminently than Christianity.

Popery, Infidelity and Mormonism, with other kindred impostures, may each in turn prefer a valid claim to the suffrage of this test. A religious system that runs with, and not against human nature; that sanctions one or more of the corrupt desires of the heart; and that offers earthly power as an earnest of heavenly crowns; may reasonably count upon success. But Christianity at its first proposal, and long after, offered to take from men everything that they most valued, cherished and loved, and to give them in exchange, in this world, nothing but truth.

Truth was the sole treasure that Christianity could offer, in place of all earthly good. It is a mistake to suppose that the hope of heaven was one of her exclusive rewards. The old religions *presented the same hope* upon much easier terms—terms with which it required only a pleasing and generous effort to comply. It is a still greater mistake to imagine that superstition, or the gratification of what by some is called the religious instinct in man, was an element in the successful propagation of Christianity. On the contrary, this feeling was arrayed with tremendous force on the other side.

It was the consummate art of Paganism, as of its Christianized successor, Popery, to take the very strongest hold upon the religious nature of man; furnishing an object and an expression for every religious affection of the soul: and entwining itself, most closely and endearingly, with all the relations of man, and in all the parts of his being. Hence these corrupt systems have always been enabled to call forth a heartier devotion, and a more enthusiastic zeal, than the truth could ever command.

I say not then that success is a test of truth. But I do say, that the success of Christian truth, contending against all human agencies, *warring against human nature itself*,

is an evidence, not only of its truth, but of a **DIVINE POWER**, accompanying and vindicating that truth. Nay, the success of such a system, under such circumstances, in a single instance, in the true and thorough conversion of one man—making out of a corrupt creature a being like to Jesus Christ—is proof of a Divine power, imprinting and sealing the truth upon the soul. For by no less an agency could the truth be thus efficacious. It is very easy for one master passion of the soul to subdue the rest; but, Christianity demands the subjugation of the master passion most especially, and brings the whole man in subjection to Christ.

It is a common saying, that truth is mighty and will prevail. This may be so, of the truth which has respect to the affairs of this world; which tends to increase the power of nations or the wealth of individuals. But religious truth is the weakest power upon this earth. She is a stranger and a pilgrim in the world; and the meanest things will take precedence of her in the regard and estimation of men. We are all witnesses of this melancholy fact. Religious truth has been appealing to men in Christian countries for many years, and where are the evidences of its power? If this truth and carnal passion are at issue, which gains the cause? When this truth and any worldly interest are contending for supremacy, which secures the triumph? Recollect that this truth, even now so powerless, is yet, for the most part, acknowledged, confessed, almost unquestioned. What think you, then, would be her influence when all the forces of the world, the physical and moral power of civil government, the entire organization of the social fabric, the character and the pecuniary interests of the most influential classes of society, the warmest affections of the heart, and, above all, the sanc-

tions and the memories of a venerated religion, contested the yet undecided issue of truth or falsehood. We may safely ask then—Could this issue have been decided in a single case in favor of truth, without the aid of Divine power? Yet this issue was so decided in many thousand cases of simultaneous conversion. It was so decided by the conversion of many whole nations. Nations utterly unlike, barbarous and civilized, separated from one another by immense spaces and by diverse languages, bowed to the same truth, confessed the same Creed. This same miracle of Almighty power is repeated now in every case of conversion. The same powers which worked in the world against Christianity, work in every heart. But God's Spirit is there also, contending for the truth, and ready to exert an omnipotent energy in all who will yield to the first strivings of that blessed Spirit.

THE INTEGRITY AND CERTAINTY OF DIVINE REVELATION
SECURED BY THE GENERAL DIFFUSION OF ITS MULTI-
PLIED FORMS.

The Spiritual kingdom which Christ established, like the preparatory dispensation, has been connected, at innumerable points, with the world's history. Open that history in any age since the preaching of Christianity, and you find the Christian Church, scattered over the earth, witnessing to its own origin, and to the sublime truths upon which it was founded. In each case this is the testimony of a whole generation of people, of diverse nations and languages, utterly ignorant of each other, but in each smallest fragment of the mighty social fabric preserving the same institutions, sacredly guarding the same Bible,

confessing the same Creed, and celebrating the same Sacraments.

ANY ALLEGED PART OF THE REVELATION NOT THUS WITNESSED AND ACCREDITED, IS NOT TO BE RECEIVED.

In one respect, indeed, the testimony will be found to vary in different ages. And this variance has given rise to much confusion and misapprehension. After the first ages of the Church you find, in many places, apparent additions to the testimony. Things which were unknown to the early Christians are insisted upon in later times as essential to salvation. But you will find the Church of this later period, changed and corrupted as it may seem to be, still retaining and faithfully witnessing, in manifest distinction from its later opinions and practices, the old Christianity—the institutions, the Bible, the Sacraments, the Creed, which had been held from the beginning. And the same Divine economy which requires us to prove the truth of all revealed religion by its history, requires and enables us to ascertain the truth of *each part* of that revelation *by the same conclusive test*. That alleged institution or doctrine of Christianity which cannot stand this test, *which was not held in the beginning* by the Christian people, which is not set forth in the Christian record, which was not witnessed by the miracles and prophecies of Christ and His Apostles as recorded in the Bible, is no Christian verity. The Church in all the world is indeed God's witness to the truth, Divinely appointed, and Providentially preserved to give an unfailing testimony. But it is the *whole* Church that is God's witness—the "Church built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the Chief Corner Stone." When you

leave out these foundations, the Church commissioned to speak with Divine authority—the Church appointed to bear testimony to the truth, no longer exists. The voice of a whole generation, separated from this foundation, is nothing at all. To speak as the Commissioned witness, the Church must speak as a WHOLE. Her testimony must be one consentient voice, borne upon the ages all along, or it is "*vox et præterea nihil*," the distempered utterance of corrupt humanity. It is idle to complain that men should be compelled thus laboriously to distinguish between the truth and the falsehood that is found among Christian people. For this is but another instance of the way in which God has spoken to us from the beginning. He addresses men as intelligent beings, bound to employ their intelligence in finding out the truth, from the testimonies which are laid before them. It is by this process that every man is compelled to discriminate Christian truth from Mahomedan, or Pagan, or any other falsehood.

The rapid view which we have taken of the nature of those testimonies, is sufficient to show that they have been accumulated by the Almighty, so as to leave all inquirers without excuse, if they fail to apprehend the truth by which alone they can be saved. God does not propose this truth to our belief upon any one kind of evidence, which might be simulated by imposture; but upon the concurrence of so many independent testimonies, Divine and human, as to preclude the possibility of human imposition.

The nature of the truth itself—its adaptation to human nature, as a remedy for its defects and a cure for its disorders—its tendency to refine, purify, and elevate its subjects, making them holy, good, and God-like—its attestation by a connected series of miracles and prophecies—the establishment and perpetuation of a visible kingdom to

bear witness to this truth—the contemporaneous institution of Sacraments, to be continually performed, in commemoration of the truth and of the miracles by which it was attested to be a revelation from God—the contemporaneous record of the revelation, and of all the facts connected with it, in a book, sacredly preserved, as the Divine charter of its privileges and duties, by the kingdom to whose keeping the truth has been committed—the connection of all these testimonies with the general history of the world, so as to render their authentication a matter of perfect certainty at all times,—these are the concurring testimonies by which God has made known to us the Christian revelation.

As He has certainly appealed to us by all this imposing evidence, we have no right to regard any pretended revelation as from Him, unless it is authenticated in the very same way, by the same accumulation of testimonies. Therefore St. Paul told the Galatians that if he, or an angel from heaven, preached any other Gospel than that which had been thus fully attested, they were not to believe him. All impostures, all imitations of Divine revelation, and all ADDITIONS to Christianity may be tried by this standard; and the result will prove, that God has sufficiently made known His will to man, so that all may come to the knowledge of the truth.

CHAPTER VII.

REDEMPTION.

MAN FALLEN AND REDEEMED.

THE fact of a Revelation having been shown, the question arises—What is the substance of that revelation? This general question can only be answered here in the most general terms. The Christian revelation is a communication to us of the knowledge of the true God and of our relations to Him. This is precisely what is so comprehensively expressed in the Creed. The Christian Creed is the exposition of the Name of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—and a brief mention of the relations which men now sustain to that God.

It would be entirely beside the purpose of this work to enter into a detailed account of Christian doctrine. I can go into that vast subject only so far as to give a practical answer to the question, which the universal consciousness of man has asked in every age—*What must I do to be saved?* If any reader of these pages has never been the subject of this consciousness, if he has never felt himself to be a sinner, if he is so satisfied with himself as to be willing to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and claim eternal life as the meet reward of his perfect holiness, then he can have no interest in ascertaining the way of salvation as described in the Gospel—for the Gospel has

no message for him. Christ came to "call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The central fact of all revelation is the Redemption of mankind in Christ Jesus. The fact of the redemption of man presupposes two other facts as its reason and foundation. First, the upright creation of man; and secondly, his fall from that condition. These are not mere doctrines, but facts. God created man in His own image, and a part of that image was the power to know Him as God, and to trust in Him as Good. This power is Faith, the very highest exercise of human reason and affection. Human reason perceives and decides upon the evidences of truth. The purest exertion of human affection is to love and trust in that God—that Infinite Good—whom the truth reveals. That such a faculty as Faith belongs to man, either in a sound or in a diseased state, is certain: for he attempts to exercise it. And every abortive attempt is just as much a proof of the original existence of the faculty, as a successful exertion of the same faculty would be.

The second fact assumed and presupposed by the great fact of Redemption is, the fall of man; the depravement, the vitiation of his whole nature, of all his powers, faculties and affections. Of this fact every man has the witness in himself: in the consciousness of his own imperfection, frailty, and sinfulness. It is a fact strongly written upon every page of human history. The credulity with which men have ever adopted the vilest religious impostures is an especial attestation of this fact. For one of the most melancholy parts of this superinduced pravity of human nature is the conversion of faith into credulity. Credulity is the vitiated, the corrupted state of faith. Faith, as we have seen, is the exercise of human reason apprehending truth upon sufficient evidence, and of human affections

moving towards the good thus apprehended. So false is the notion sometimes entertained that faith and reason are antagonistic. Credulity is the effort of inferior reason, accrediting falsehood upon insufficient evidence; and of corrupt affections, seizing hold upon the falsehood thus received.

Now, as when you prove that a man has a broken limb, or a diseased organ, you as certainly prove the existence of the limb, or of the organ; so the universal prevalence of that credulity which, in every age, has admitted and relied upon the grossest impostures, proves both the great facts which we have stated, viz: the original gift to man of that noble faculty, by which he was enabled to apprehend and love the truth; and the corruption of that faculty, which induces him rather to receive and to trust in a falsehood.

The Redemption of man, by some Divine intervention, from this ruin is, again, a fact, the proof of which is patent and inscribed upon the whole history and condition of the race. For, if truth is at all received among men, and has ever triumphed over error; if real goodness is loved, and genuine Godliness is practised, these are facts which prove the more general fact of this Divine restoration of humanity. For, a bitter fountain cannot send forth sweet waters; a diseased organ cannot perform a healthy function; imbecile credulity cannot convert itself into enlightened faith.

The upright creation, and the fall of man, are shown by the correspondence, and by the opposition, between human nature and the law of God.

Every man who examines thoroughly the moral law, sees that it is *the law of his nature*; the constitution of the Almighty, written upon his soul, and demanding his

obedience. He finds that this law, if perfectly obeyed, would produce the highest development, and the greatest happiness of which his nature is capable. This correspondence between a perfect law and the soul of man, proves that the soul was originally created as perfect as the law which is thus a part of its essential constitution.

But every man finds that this same law, although evidently ordained to be a law of life, is to him a law of condemnation: because he has broken the law. Instead of securing, by obedience, the happiness it promised, and which it manifestly tends to produce, he has incurred its penalty by disobedience. He is compelled therefore to concur with St. Paul in the declaration, "The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. Wherefore, the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" Rom. vii. 10, 12. But the creature for whom it was ordained has left his first estate—fallen from the uprightness which corresponded with the law, and finds himself now under the curse of that same holy, just and good commandment.

This is the plain teaching of nature, without the aid of revelation. The word of God simply affirms the same thing: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." Gen. i. 26—27. Here was man perfect in himself, and with a perfect law adapted to his nature. Life and happiness were the conditions of obedience to this law. Death and misery its penalties for disobedience. An external Sacrament was at the same time appointed, as the test and witness of man's continued allegiance to the law of life. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17. After the disobedience and the expul-

sion from Paradise, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

"And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Gen. vi. 5, 12.

St. Paul tells us "There is none righteous, no not one." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. iii. 10, 20, and v. 18. The scriptural teaching upon this subject is therefore but the reiteration of the universal consciousness and observation of men.

Christian religion assures us that a new element of life has been given to the race of mankind through the man Christ Jesus. An ancient and a modern heresy maintains that the corruption of human nature never was such as to prevent men from recovering themselves from the power of sin, and obeying perfectly the law of God. Without confronting this dogma with the clear testimony of Scripture, let it be tried by the single test of observation. Let one community, in all the long catalogue of nations, be shown, where this result has been accomplished. Let this result be shown, even in a single man, beyond the range of the Christian revelation. Christianity allows that the grace of God has appeared unto all men, and that some gleams of revealed truth have been retained among all nations. By these facts she accounts for the good that is found in the most desperate conditions of humanity.

If the hypothesis of the self restorative powers of human nature be true, we ought to see the full evolution and the complete success of these powers, in a fair proportion of

cases, in every country. So far from making this exhibit, without which the hypothesis must be dismissed as utterly destitute of foundation, the actual phenomena are all in the opposite direction. No nation or tribe of men has ever been known even to improve its religious system, or to make one single step in advance towards that object, without the assistance, direct or indirect, of Judaism, or of Christianity—that is, of Divine revelation. On the contrary, whenever communities have been removed from the influence of this external aid, their only progress has been downward—their only change, increasing degeneracy.

This fact is the complete and utter refutation of the Pelagian heresy, which claims for man a self-renovating power. But it displays in still bolder relief the strange absurdity of the position of some modern illuminati, formerly referred to, which maintains that Christianity itself is the unassisted product of the human mind; and that, at the present stage of human progress, a new evolution, of a higher religion than Christianity, from the same teeming fountain, is required. But after eighteen centuries of Christian progress, where shall we look for a man superior to the Man Christ Jesus, to be the author of this new religion, and the model of a higher style of humanity? Shall we take any one of the German transcendentalists? Or one of their English or American copyists? The proposition is painfully incongruous, and shows the blind credulity of dreaming unbelief.

Jesus Christ is the only perfect man that has yet appeared upon the earth since the fall. He alone displayed in His whole life the entire correspondence between human nature and the Divine law. He alone was without sin. He is the Author of redemption. God in Christ is the Restorer of man, and the perfect model for our imita-

tion and example. From Him is derived that new life, that quickening power, by which His followers are enabled to grow in likeness to Him. The same Spirit by which He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin, and assumed man's nature, is given unto us, to change that nature in us into the image of Himself, into the likeness of His perfect manhood.

THE FIRST AND THE SECOND ADAM.

It is impossible to understand the relation of man to the Gospel of salvation, unless we clearly recognize the antagonism, the conflict of opposing forces, in his present condition, resulting from these two great facts—the Fall and the Redemption.

The creative act which brought into being the first man and his consort, involved likewise the successive existence of the countless myriads of men who, in each generation, have lived, and acted, and suffered. The one fiat of creation goes on, extending and perpetuating its power, making the first man to live continuously in his posterity, and to fill the earth with the multitude of those who are identical with him in nature. This is a great mystery.

This head and beginning of the human race, falling from original righteousness, was himself corrupt; and all his descendants are like him, in this, as in every other part of their nature. For his being is their being, his nature is their nature. What he was they are. By natural procreation they have no other life or being than his. The inclination of this fallen and degenerate nature is to evil. Its tendency is downward. It spoils and defiles every thing it touches. The taint of sin pervades the whole mass of

human feelings, interests and pursuits. The noblest gifts of God, the purest, the holiest, the loveliest things of earth, it perverts, abuses and pollutes. Cut off from God, the Fountain of good, it goes, by the fatal momentum of its own evil disposition, further and further from Him. It continues to sink lower and lower in the scale of moral excellence, until, if no other power interposed, it would reach that lowest depth of degeneracy, which can say, "Evil, be thou my good." When this consummation of man's evil tendencies is reached, all possibilities of happiness and joy are at an end. The tortured slave of relentless passions will then passively submit to their control, and writhe in pitiable impotence beneath their power.

It is not permitted to man fully to realize this description of his natural state and of its result in this world. But every man is conscious of enough in his own nature and disposition to enable him to verify the first part of it, as at least a partial description of himself. And a few persons are permitted to live, who, by long continued habits of iniquity, and of loathsome viciousness, have almost reached that horrid consummation of the evil tendencies of their nature.

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift, that natural tendency to evil is but a partial account of man, in his present state, redeemed by the blood of Christ from the dominion of sin, from the power of the Devil. There is a force within him which opposes this natural tendency to evil: and which, if unobstructed and obediently submitted to, will conduct every man in the pathway of righteousness, to God, to heaven and to happiness. This other force, this Divine power, this holier, Godward tendency, is derived, to the *whole race* of man, from the second Adam—**THE MAN**—who is the Lord from heaven. This also is a

great mystery! Not more mysterious, but more glorious than the other mystery of creative energy. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.") "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1st Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45, 47, 49 verses.

The first Adam was the Son of God by creation, and was made in the likeness of his Creator, and pronounced to be very good. By simple depravation he corrupted himself, sinking down from the Eternal Source of goodness and purity. As the progenitor of the human race had thus become the source of uncleanness and corruption to his posterity, God provides for the race of mankind a new beginning, a fountain of strength and holiness and purity. Christ is this second and nobler Adam—the new head and representative of the human race, from whom and through whom all men derive the inclination and the power to do good.

THE SECOND ADAM IS GOD AND MAN.

Who is this Second Man, this better and purer fountain of humanity, the Regenerator and Restorer of a fallen race? Is He a second creation, a new and faultless being, formed by the Almighty, and sent into this world to teach men how they should live, and what they should do? Then is he a stranger to *our* humanity, and has no claim to the title which He assumed—The Son of Man. And

all the precepts of practical morality he delivered had been taught before. The Bible every where negatives the hypothesis of a new creation, but tells of a Being all powerful, and doing His own will, who, because the creatures he would redeem were "partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." Heb. ii. 14—16.

The exalted Being who thus, by an act of His own will, took upon Him our humanity, is represented in the Scripture under the two fold relation of a Divine and a human nature. His true humanity is strongly insisted upon, and frequently declared. His Divine nature is not less emphatically mentioned. The titles by which His Divinity is set forth, although very strong, are much less decisive upon this point than the attributes ascribed to Him. His eternity, His self-existence, His creative power, His omnipresence, His universal sovereignty, His uncontrolled and omnipotent will, His right to the worship of all creatures, His occasional assumption of equality with the Supreme Deity, drive us to one of three conclusions: either, 1. That Christianity is a revelation of a system of idolatry—the elevation of a creature to the place of the Creator in human estimation and regard; or, 2. That it is a revelation of a system of Polytheism—the acknowledgment and worship of several Gods; or, 3. That it is a revelation of the old Christian Creed of One God in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that the second Person of this adorable Godhead, "for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man;" became the second Head and Fountain of life, and strength, and purity, and power, to the race He essayed to redeem, to save and to ennoble.

THE TRUE DEITY OF CHRIST AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE
DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION.

We dare not say that the exigency of Divine and human relations brought about by the sinfulness of man, was an adequate occasion for the wondrous condescension of God, manifested in the redemption of the world by the gift and sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. But we can certainly say, that no conceivable exhibition of the atrociousness of sin and of the goodness of God could equal this.

Goodness is the eternal and immutable condition of happiness to moral beings. Sin, by an eternal necessity, involves the forfeiture of that happiness. This truth, wrought into the constitution of every moral being, can only be fully known and apprehended by those who have felt the dread penalty of transgression. (The meaning and purpose of redemption is to bring man back to goodness, to God-likeness.) To drive a reluctant sinner into heaven is a contradiction in terms. It is an incongruous mingling of antagonistic and mutually destroying propositions. Heaven is the place and the state of the good, of those who, being like God, love Him, and enjoy a portion of His happiness.

To accomplish this redemption two conditions are required. 1st. Man must see and understand the necessity of goodness, the odiousness, heinousness, and destructive power of sin. 2nd. Man must be enabled to fulfil the first and great commandment of the law—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and strength. Now it is incompatible with man's intended restoration to holiness and happiness, to make him understand the first of these truths, by bringing upon him the penalty of sin, the

curse of the law, the very destruction from which he is to be rescued. The Infinite God taking our nature, suffering in that nature for sin, and paying down in His own person a full satisfaction to the violated law, impresses in the strongest possible manner upon the soul of man, and proclaims to all created intelligences, these great truths—the absolute necessity of goodness; the hatefulness and the destructive power of sin.

This same exhibition of love accomplishes most effectually that other correlative condition of redemption, by furnishing to men the occasion, and the power, to fulfil the first and great commandment—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and strength." Obedience to this law is the essential condition of happiness to all free and intelligent beings. But how shall a creature estranged from God begin to fulfil it? How shall a being, the slave of sense, so apprehend the purely spiritual and eternal I AM, as to be capable of passing by all the objects of affection and delight with which God has surrounded His creatures, and fixing upon this impalpable and unapproachable Majesty, the holiest and best affections of a heart that is but overwhelmed with amazement and awe at the contemplation of His greatness? The question is answered, and can only be answered in the mystery of the Incarnation, in the mystery of the Cross. There the Infinite stoops to our necessities, descends to our apprehensions, veils in human flesh the majesty of the Godhead—becomes man as we are—sympathizes with every affection and feeling, with every pain, and sorrow, and joy, of humanity. The question was answered by the blessed Saviour Himself, when, speaking of His death, He said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." St. John xii. 32. It is God in Christ who draws to Himself the hearts of men.

The Infinite God surely challenges the supreme affection of all men, because, as Man, He can be known, and, as Man, has manifested a love to them passing conception. He challenges our love, for "He first loved us, and gave Himself for us, the Just for the unjust." He assumed our place as sinners, and suffered the punishment due to our offences. The heroic girl who, with devoted affection, threw herself before the body of the man she loved, and received the ball of his adversary into her own bosom, undoubtedly received a return of affection only limited by the capacity of the heart of this man to love. Who can dispute her claim to his *supreme affection*, but that glorious Saviour, who gave to her, from His infinite fullness, the sensibility and the power to merit this love; and who has proved His own affection in a manner yet more attractive and illustrious? EMMANUEL—God with us—the Eternal Son, suffering as man the woes of humanity, and thus relieving us from the bitter pains of eternal death which we had incurred, makes possible our obedience to the first and great commandment.

Let now this Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, be any created substitute, be other than God, and where would be the efficacy of this transaction to enable man to fulfil that great commandment? Our supreme affection would be given to the creature who had so loved us, and so redeemed us. But our God, lifted up for our offences, and drawing all men to Him through the power of love, realizes in human experience the fulfilment of that command. Thus are men to be drawn to God. Thus are they to be made like unto Him, by constant intercourse and communion with the Being whom they love. And thus are they to acquire that nature—that Godliness—of which perfect happiness is the essential state and condition.

CHAPTER VIII.

TERMS OF ADMISSION TO THE WAY OF SALVATION.

When we go to the word of God for the answer to the question, "What must we do to be saved?" we find some very brief, precise and emphatic answers. In the great commission which our Saviour gave to His Apostles just before his ascension, he said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." St. Mark xvi. 16. The same august authority had before declared, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." St. John iii. 3, 5, 16. In the first sermon preached by the assembled Apostles after the ascension of our Lord, this very question was answered by the injunction, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Acts ii. 38. In the next recorded discourse the Apostles state the way of salvation in these terms: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts iii. 19.

It is unnecessary to accumulate here the numerous passages of Scripture in which salvation is ascribed to faith

alone, or to repentance alone. The prominence thus given to these two graces as representative of the whole plan of salvation, is due to their fundamental, continuing, and pervading agency in the economy of salvation. Christian religion is the revelation of a system of Divinely instituted *means of grace*, whereby a guilty sinner is to receive the pardon of his sins, and supernatural power to change his corrupt nature into the likeness of the Son of God. In this entire scheme of redemption, man is treated according to his nature, as an intelligent and free agent. He therefore must be informed of the way of his salvation, acquiesce in it, and actively co-operate with his Maker and Redeemer in its accomplishment. To this end he must believe the facts and doctrines communicated by the revelation, and must trust in the will and power of Christ his Saviour to effect the purpose of the revelation—the salvation of his soul. This belief and trust in Christ, when sincere and active, is the saving faith of the Gospel. Faith therefore, is fundamental and indispensable. It lies at the foundation of Christianity, and is the first beginning, and the continuing impulse, of every part and step of the way of salvation. In one important particular too, faith is truly, and emphatically, *alone*, in the work of salvation. For faith alone can bring the sinner to Christ, the Author of salvation. Faith alone can bring the child of corruption to the fountain of cleanliness, and purity, and health—the heir of death to the Source and Giver of Life.

Repentance too, is an indispensable and continuing condition in the whole work of salvation. For this is an agency which the Holy Spirit uses, and sanctifies, for the production of the very object and meaning of salvation, the change of a foul and sinful into a pure and holy being. Repentance, thus endued with healthful energy by the

power of the Holy Ghost, brings us to loathe and abhor our own corruption, and our wickedness, and to seek earnestly and diligently for cleansing grace, and for pardoning grace, from the Infinite Fountain of all grace, God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

I have before said that many passages of Scripture might be cited, in which faith alone is mentioned as the mean of salvation. Others again speak only of repentance, as the condition. But in the first class is repentance set aside? And in the second, is faith excluded? Not at all. The Gospel, although composed of so many fragmentary portions, is a connected whole, and every verse is constructed with a distinct reference to the analogy, or "proportion of faith."

Every part of the Bible recognizes the Bible and Christianity as a whole. When repentance is declared to be the condition of salvation, faith is presupposed; and when faith is so distinguished, it is because the faith spoken of includes repentance. † The word faith is used in several senses in the Bible. In its lowest meaning it is mere intellectual belief of a truth. In its highest sense, as saving faith, it always includes repentance, conversion, trust in Christ as a Saviour, and the actual going to Christ for salvation.

* Repentance is also used in a higher and lower sense. In the latter, in its own simple meaning, repentance is, the looking back upon a thing that has been done, and is therefore past recall, with sorrow, pain, and grief. In the Gospel use of the term, there is added to this, a full determination to forsake and avoid the evil thing that has produced this sorrow, pain, and grief. The actual accomplishment of the resolve included in repentance—the actual forsaking of evil and turning to good—is Conversion. When Repentance is spoken of as the sole condition of

salvation, it becomes, like faith when similarly used, a complex term, standing for all the things necessarily connected with it in the Gospel plan of salvation.

The frequent and conspicuous employment of these two words in the Gospel, and their connection with two other expressions—"Baptism" and "The Kingdom of God"—make certain these three great features of the way of salvation:—1. That a conviction of sin, and an anxious desire to escape from its power and its condemnation, are indispensable requisites in the condition of him who would find the salvation of the Gospel. 2. That a deep sense of helplessness, of inability to obey the commandments and to keep the law of life, and a reaching upward to lay hold upon one that is mighty, to find a Redeemer, and to trust in Him, is another essential requisite in the condition of the seeker after salvation. 3. That God does not intend that these spiritual exercises of the soul should expend themselves in indeterminate thoughts and feelings, which lead to no result, and are presently exchanged for other thoughts and feelings; but that, as man is composed of soul and body, so the plan of salvation, in correspondence with the nature of its subjects, has an external body in intimate connection with its spiritual truths. Therefore, the kingdom of God is set up in the world, in visible opposition to the kingdom of evil. This visible kingdom of God furnishes to those who think that they repent and believe, the opportunity of actualizing their spiritual states of consciousness. By reducing these mental states to external acts, we are enabled at once to prove and to perfect them.

No man can be sure of the quality and value of any mere mental state, until he has the opportunity of translating it into action. Every one thinks that he is exceedingly charitable, until the ability and occasion for the exercise of

that feeling is presented, and then it is often found to have been but an unreal fancy. No man ever believed that he would be a thief or a murderer, until the opportunity, or the provocation came. Good and bad thoughts and emotions are inchoate and imperfect until thus realized in action.

X God has adapted revealed religion to the truth of our nature. The existence of His kingdom, with its Sacraments and ordinances, enables every man to test the quality and the value of his religious thoughts and affections. If he indeed abhors sin, and would forsake it, he may prove, while he perfects, his repentance, by renouncing the powers of darkness, and fleeing for refuge into the kingdom of light. Baptism is appointed to be the exercise and realization both of *repentance and †faith. It is the actual renunciation of the evil powers, thus consummating repentance. It is the actual entrance into the kingdom of grace and mercy established in Jesus Christ, thus actualizing faith in the power of Christ to save sinners.

The Sacraments of Christ's religion are no works of ours. By no possibility can any merit be attributed to us from their performance. Their very meaning is an utter denial of all merit or worth in us, and an entire reliance upon the mercy of God in Christ the Saviour. Upon God's part they are acts of grace. Upon man's part they are acts of faith in the necessity and power of that grace. Sacraments are the appointed channels of supernatural grace to us, and the instituted expression of our faith in God and in Christ. By them faith comes to Christ for salvation. By them faith puts forth her hand and lays hold on Christ. Faith thus realizes itself, and places him who has it within the covenant of grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, and secures to him the adoption of a child into the family of God.

When the heir of salvation is thus translated, by grace and by faith, from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, the work of salvation is but just fairly begun. Then comes the life-long discipline of Providence and of Grace, chastening, training, strengthening, and perfecting the child of God by innumerable ministrations.

One great difficulty in the way of the popular reception and appreciation of *the whole body of Christian truth*, is, a too general oblivion of the fact, that the Church of Christ is an integral and essential part of Christ's religion.

If Christian religion is simply the revelation of certain *abstract propositions*, to be used and applied by men according to their varying notions of fitness and expediency; if the clothing and body of that religion, the Church, the Sacraments, and the Ministry, are mere human devices for the more effective application of those abstract truths, then the whole teaching of the Church for 1800 years has been one stupendous system of fraud and falsehood; then it is right for every man, according to his own notions of fitness and expediency, to discard, retain, or modify any part of this human device. Upon that supposition the external part of Christian religion is just as much subject to human control as the rules and regulations of a Temperance Society, and possesses just the same kind of virtue and efficacy. To talk, then, about any particular class of men being ambassadors for Christ would be an absurdity; for, upon this hypothesis, either there are no ambassadors for Christ, or all men are equally so. Upon the same hypothesis, to require men to be baptized, or to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, would be an imposition upon human credulity, and an infringement of individual freedom.

But, if the hypothesis from which these consequences

necessarily flow, be untrue, *if the Church of Christ is a part of the religion of Christ*, if God himself has provided a Body for the Spiritual truth which He revealed, thus adapting to man's compound nature the religion which He gave to man, then this appointment should be reverently received and faithfully obeyed.

If there is a ministry in Christ's Church of Divine appointment, if the Sacraments exist by Divine institution, if the Spiritual truth and the outward form of Christianity have been communicated to us as ONE REVELATION, then, surely, there is no human power adequate to the change or modification of the Truth, as *thus* revealed; there can be no right or prerogative, on the part of any of the subjects of this wondrous grace of God, to separate the things which He has joined together, and select one portion of the truth for their obedience, while they discard or modify the rest. If the same gracious Lord who required Faith, required also, in the very same utterance, Baptism, as the condition of salvation to all to whom the gospel is proposed—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"—who shall dare to assume the place of the Almighty, and disjoin these conditions, and propose to man new terms of acceptance with God? If the life-giving word which assures us of the availability of repentance, gives to us that assurance in the formula—"Repent and be Baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins," shall we harshly condemn the Church of Christ for her reverent submission to the very terms of salvation prescribed by the Author of salvation?

The case of the Episcopal Church is this: She professes to hold, and tries to maintain the Christian religion in its integrity—just as it was revealed, without change, addition, or diminution—as it was held and maintained for many ages after Christ. That Church regards Christianity as a

Revelation made once for all, perfect and entire—the mind of God in regard to man. Man could not discover this truth, therefore it was *revealed*. Man cannot improve it, therefore it was revealed in its *perfectness*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIVINE LIFE AND THE NEW BIRTH.

VARIANT SYSTEMS.

HAVING thus, in the most general terms, pointed out the way of salvation, we are prepared now to consider this great subject in a more detailed and systematic manner. If I were presenting these all-concerning truths for the first time to my readers it would be very idle and improper to disturb their minds, and divide their attention, by the mention of diverse and conflicting views in regard to the way of life. But the existence of these variant and dissimilar views among Christians is a matter of unhappy notoriety. And many of the most formidable objections to the practical reception of Christianity, by vast multitudes, come from the confused perception of truth, occasioned by these jarring delineations. It will be best, therefore, to meet the real difficulties of the case, the difficulties which are actually in the minds of men, by a distinct statement and recognition of these variant systems. The truth thus presented in juxtaposition, and in contrast with opposing errors, will be more clearly distinguished and more perfectly understood.

Each one of the erroneous systems referred to has a basis of truth. In no other way could they have originated,

or continue to be currently received. The denial, by each of these contradictory systems, of the truth upon which the other is based, helps to give currency and vitality to both. It will be found that the actual truths contained in them all, are recognized and provided for, in that which I shall first assume, and then prove, to be the system of the Bible and of the Church.

There are literally now, with regard to the beginning of a Christian life, three Gospels currently preached in the world. That Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, is indeed earnestly declared by nearly all who call themselves Christians. But with regard to the commencement of the Divine Life in the soul of man, there are, we repeat, three Gospels, or systems which profess to be such.

One is the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. That Gospel teaches,

1st. That the entire race of man is by nature fallen, degenerate, dead. That each human being is so "far gone from original righteousness, as *of his own nature to be inclined to evil*," so that "the flesh *lusteth always contrary to the Spirit*," and "is not subject to the law of God." ✕

Art. 9. ✕

2nd. That our Saviour Christ suffered death upon the Cross for the redemption of all mankind; and made there a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. ✕

3rd. That from the right hand of the Eternal Majesty, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us, He hath given gifts unto men, even the inestimable gift of His Holy Spirit, to be the Teacher, Monitor, and Guide of the

✕ 1 John, 1:9, ch. 2:27. — Roman, 7:5, 14, 17, 18, 23, 25.

souls for which He died ; and to dwell in the hearts of men, the principle of a new and Divine Life, the bond of re-union between God and man. 7

4th. That this redemption, and this consequent gift is as extensive and as universal as the previous condemnation which has come into the world by sin. Accordingly we are assured that the Sacrifice of Christ, and the benefits of that Sacrifice, were made over to mankind—to the entire race of man—from the foundation of the world.*

5th. The Divine Life thus given to every man is a germ, a seed, which does not necessarily, and by the force of the mere gift, destroy and take the place of the carnal nature, but co-exists with that carnal nature, and enters into conflict with all that is evil and depraved in the natural life; and, if properly entertained and nurtured, will ultimately overcome, mortify, and kill all the evil of corrupt nature, and substitute for that evil, purity, goodness, and every Divine affection.

6th. The Church of Christ, with all its appliances of faith and holiness, has been appointed as the last, the fullest, and the most perfect of the means and instrumentalities for the nurture and development of the Divine Life, from its embryo existence as a power in the soul of man, through all the successive stages of growth, to the maturity of perfect manhood in Christ Jesus; and to be introduced into that Church by Baptism is the second birth—the birth of water and of the Spirit.

We design presently to offer the proofs of each of these propositions.

One of the other Gospels to which we have referred, teaches,

1st. That the Gift of God, the Holy Spirit, the Divine Life, is imparted only to the Baptized. That it begins in

* Roman. 8:16-20 & 29-31 v. - 1 John. 2:12 v. or 2:17-
+ 3:1-10 v. - 1 Peter. 2:1-10 v. - 1 Peter. 2:1-10 v. - 1 Peter. 2:1-10 v.

Baptism, and is inseparably connected with that Sacrament.

2nd. That the Divine Life, by the mere gift thereof, effectually and at once destroys the carnal life—the whole evil of corrupt nature—remitting the subject of this gift to the state of Adam before the fall, making him pure, immaculate, without sin.

3rd. The same system teaches that this pure and spotless being may, nevertheless, fall, as Adam fell, by sin; in which case the Divine Life, before imparted, is in its turn utterly extinguished and destroyed; and the carnal life, by an anticipated resurrection, reappears in full strength and development, and resumes its previous sway and mastery over the soul.

4th. For this new and terrible incident of humanity, unknown to the true Gospel, and unprovided for there, the new Gospel has invented a Supplemental Sacrament of far more practical value and efficacy than the Sacrament of Baptism which our blessed Lord provided. For, according to the system we are now describing, the supplemental Sacrament of Penance reconveys the Divine Life to the soul in full maturity and strength, just as often as it may be forfeited and lost by sin.

There is yet “another Gospel,” very similar in some of its features to the last mentioned, but differing from it in other particulars. It agrees with it in denying peremptorily that the Gift of God, the Holy Spirit, the Divine Life, is bestowed impartially upon all mankind. But instead of restricting this gift to the Baptized, and looking upon Baptism as the instrument by which it is conferred, this other Gospel teaches,

1st. That the gift of the Eternal Spirit, is bestowed only upon those whom it terms converted persons, and who

have passed through certain experiences, and have been moved by a peculiar class of feelings designated as the New Birth.

So far the maintainers of this Gospel, which constitutes the popular theology of the day, go together in entire harmony of statement. But at this point two parties are presented to our view, who go as far asunder as possible. The smaller of these teaches,

2nd. That the converted persons, upon whom the Holy Spirit is bestowed, have been previously designated by an eternal decree; and that the recipients of this Divine Life can never lose it, or fail to secure the everlasting reward of the righteous.

The larger class of the adherents of the popular theology maintain, instead of the last proposition,

3rd. That men may fall from grace. That the Divine Life may be often lost and recovered; and that the way to recover it is to repeat the process by which it was first obtained—that is, by certain well known appliances, to stimulate the feelings, and to seek for the experiences which were at first regarded as the beginning and the assurance of the Divine Life.

This modification of the popular theology agrees, it will be perceived, with the Romish system previously described, in the principle, that the Divine Life can be thus repeatedly and entirely lost, and as often and as suddenly regained. But it differs again from that system in this, that instead of going to the Priest to receive the Divine Life anew from him, *through the Instrumentality of a newly invented Sacrament*, the devotee of the last system *waits upon the exercises of a protracted meeting*, until the desired point of excitement, that may be regarded as a Divine impulse, is reached.

It is not our purpose now to encounter or to expose either of these false systems—the human substitutes for the counsels of Heavenly Wisdom. The simple description of them in the plain didactic method which we have adopted, will enable every student of the Bible to perceive how far they deviate from that full and perfect standard of truth. And the positive proof which we intend to offer of the several propositions of the true Gospel will be the best refutation of these opposing dogmas. But as both these human systems derive a good deal of popular favor and apparent plausibility from a misapprehension of certain expressions in the Epistles of St. John, we will begin our examination by an attempt to ascertain the true meaning of those expressions.

As our 5th proposition provides for a perpetual growth of the Divine Life, from the first beginnings to the highest attainments of holiness, so it allows for the continued existence of the evil of corrupt nature, not yet subdued, in those who have received the Holy Spirit: and perhaps never to be subdued, on account of the faithlessness of the subject of this Divine grace. For as the evil nature and the Divine nature have entered into antagonism in the same person, the evil may be so entertained as to be always predominant, and ultimately to drive away the Spirit of life and holiness.

To this existence and possible triumph of a sinful disposition, in the subject of Divine grace, the expressions of St. John, before referred to, are objected. They are the following: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."* "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of

* If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
1 John 1. 8 v.

God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." 1st St. John iii..9; v. 4, 18.

These are certainly very strong and emphatic expressions. But if taken literally, and apart from the purpose of the Apostle, they will prove too much for any system of theology. For thus taken, these expressions would prove that whosoever is born of God can *never, under any contingency*, commit sin. But this is directly opposed to universal experience, to the whole tenor of Scripture, to many positive declarations of the same Apostle, and to every theory of religion. The same system of interpretation would make this very Epistle a collection of contradictions.* The Apostle positively declares that "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." iv. 15. Again, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." v. 1.

The way to understand these and like expressions in the Epistle, is to look at its purpose. That purpose was principally to furnish to Christians a number of *practical and experimental tests of their continuance in the faith*, and of their perseverance in the way of holiness. Each one of these aphorisms is evidently designed for the use of the elect children of God, as a personal test for determining whether *they are practically living*, to the new and Divine nature, or to the old and carnal nature. Interpreted by this obvious purpose of the Apostle, the whole Epistle coincides with the analogy of faith in assuming the fact of the co-existence of the good and evil nature in every man; and of the perpetual conflict between them, until one or the other is subdued. Nothing in this Epistle, therefore, is at all repugnant to that which we have assumed to be the Church's teaching, and the Gospel plan of salvation. The

Apostle simply takes several distinct and separate results of the Divine Life on the one hand, and of the Carnal Life on the other, and applies each in turn to the determination of the question, whether the common subject of both is practically and habitually living to the one or to the other. "Whosoever is born of God," is therefore equivalent, for this purpose of the Apostle, to the formula—Whosoever is truly and faithfully living under the power and influence of the new and Divine Life. Such an one acknowledges "that Jesus is the Christ." He does not willingly and habitually commit sin; but strives against the sinful disposition. By prayer, watchfulness, the practice of repentance, and other means of grace, he is gradually subduing the carnal nature—the tendency to sin; and the Divine Life is acquiring the entire mastery of his soul and body.

"The children of the Devil," on the other hand, in the sense of the Apostle, are those who submit themselves to the power of the carnal nature—who, having received the Spirit of God, the new and Divine Life, resist that Spirit, live in continual opposition to His influence and teaching, and are thus gradually destroying the Divine Life in their souls.

Having disposed of this source of objection, we will offer now the proof of those propositions in regard to the way of Life, which we have affirmed to be the teaching of the Church of Christ.

THE DEATH OF ALL MANKIND IN ADAM.

1. The first proposition of the true Gospel—the foundation upon which the whole superstructure of a Christian life is built—declares, that the entire race of man is by

nature fallen, degenerate, dead. That each human being is so "far gone from original righteousness, as of his own nature to be inclined to evil;" so that "the flesh lusteth *always* contrary to the Spirit," and "is not subject to the law of God." Art. 9. *Art. 9, = See we say we*

This proposition ought to be sufficiently proved for Churchmen by the above express declaration of the article to that effect. The language and spirit of all our formularies assumes this truth as a postulate: and the testimony of reason, observation, and Scripture, all concur in the same conclusion.

From the Scripture we learn that the original penalty of transgression affixed to the one positive enactment of the Paradisaic state was death—a dissolution of the original union between God and man. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Accordingly, in that very day on which he sinned, the fallen rebel was driven forth from the place where that communion had subsisted; and cherubims and a flaming sword were stationed, "which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." The mortality of the body was involved in this death, as one of its ulterior consequences; but so far from constituting the principal burden of the sentence, it did not occur for several hundred years after the fall; and under the economy of grace it has been made a necessary means of relief from other consequences of the same judgment, and the passage from a world of tribulation to a heaven of glory.

It will be unnecessary to recapitulate the various familiar passages of Scripture which show the completeness and universality of the natural corruption of man. "Can a clean thing come out of an unclean?" is an interrogatory of Scripture which reason and observation answer unhesi-

tatingly in the negative. As Adam essentially was, so his posterity must continue to be, unless the Almighty, by a further interposition, infuse a new element of life and character into His degenerate creature. To inform us of such an interposition on the part of our Heavenly Father, and of the manner of it, is the purpose of the blessed Gospel. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." And what constitutes this death in Adam, and this life in Christ, the Apostle plainly tells us. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is death*; but to be spiritually minded *is life* and peace. Because the *carnal mind* is *enmity* against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."—Rom. viii. 5—8. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—Rom. viii. 13.

Here it is abundantly affirmed that the natural man is really dead unto God, and to the things of God: that he is at enmity with God, and therefore hates and opposes Him and his will. That he neither *is* nor *can* be subject to the law of God; and therefore he is incapable of good in thought, word, and deed. For as the law of God commandeth the things which are good, in thought, word, and deed, he who *cannot obey that law* must be under an inevitable incapacity to do, think, or speak, any thing that is good.

The same Apostle, in another place, states, in yet more startling terms, the utter degeneracy and deadness of mere human nature in regard to all that is good and pure. For he affirms that it is incapable of receiving or of knowing

the things that are freely given to us of God—that is, all spiritual truth. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither *can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” And he had previously illustrated this proposition by an argument derived from the nature of things.

“For what man,” he says, “knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

“Now we have received the Spirit of God, *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*” —

1 Cor. ii. 12. Again: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Rom. vii. 14, 18.

We have dwelt the longer upon the Scriptural testimony to this proposition, because a clear and full understanding of it is essential to a correct appreciation of all the rest of the Gospel system.

The formularies of the Church are equally full in disclaiming for the natural man all capacity for good, and in ascribing all the good of which we are conscious in ourselves to the immediate gift of God by His Holy Spirit. The Collect for peace in the evening service declares that "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed from God;" and cannot therefore be the dictate of the natural heart, which is at enmity with God. The address in the beginning of the Baptismal Office, says: "For as much as all men are conceived and born in sin, (and that which is born of the flesh is flesh,) and they who are in the flesh *cannot please* God, but live in sin." In the Collects we find the following express, and many more implied recognitions of the same truth. "Almighty

And that is in our 9th edition, but above all
for their inestimable love in the consolation
the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the infinite
grace, and for the hope of glory.

God who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves," 2nd S. in Lent. "As by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires; so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect," Easter. "Who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men," 4th af. Easter. "From whom all good things do come, grant that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that are good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same," 5th af. East. "Because through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee," 1st af. Trin. "Grant to us the spirit to think and do always such things as are right; that we who cannot do anything that is good without thee," 9th af. Trin. "Of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service," 13th af. Trin. "For as much as without thee we are not able to please thee," 19th af. Trin. "Who maketh us both to will and to do those things which are good and acceptable unto thy Divine Majesty," Confirmation Office. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." Art. 10.

To crown the whole of this testimony, the Christian Creed teaches us to believe in the Holy Ghost as the Author and Giver of Life. This, like all the articles of the Creed, is brief, but very full and expressive. If without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost there can be no true life, then the mere carnal nature, *devoid of that Spirit*, must be altogether dead unto God and the things of God :

and therefore insensible to goodness, incapable of knowing God, of loving, fearing, or obeying Him.

With this ample testimony of the Scriptures and the Church reason concurs. For how can that being who is cut off from all communion with God, the Source and Fountain of good, and is at enmity with Him be capable of doing good, or of delighting in goodness? If man's nature is essentially corrupt, and inclined to evil, as universal observation attests, how, but by the direct inspiration of the Almighty, can that nature be turned to good, or be made capable of appreciating and enjoying that which is good?

The doctrine thus conclusively proved by so many weighty testimonies, is that which the Pelagian heresy vainly attempted to overturn. Very like to this Pelagian heresy, and as directly opposed to this doctrine, and to the testimonies by which it is established, is the notion that there were some relics of the heavenly image left in Adam, and consequently in his posterity, by which men can perform some good things, and from which are derived that amiability and nobleness of character by which many persons are distinguished. On the contrary, it has been fully proved that the natural condition of man is a death, an utter insensibility to all goodness. There were powers and faculties left in man by the fall; but these, being cut off from the Fountain of goodness, were only and wholly inclined to evil. If, therefore, any good is found in man, its source must be elsewhere than in his own nature.

The Gospel tells us whence that goodness proceeds which we find everywhere to co-exist with the evil in the heart of man. And it further tells us how, and upon what inducement that new capacity for goodness came into the heart of man. For, "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of

one, the *free gift* came upon all men unto justification of life." "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. v. 18, 21.

The Scriptures last cited are at once the substance and the proof of our 2nd, 3d, and 4th propositions. *Page 72-3.*

THE UNIVERSALITY OF REDEMPTION, AND OF THE GIFT OF LIFE.

2. The second proposition affirms the universality of redemption. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—1 St. John ii. 1, 2. *Page 72.*

THE HOLY GHOST THE SOURCE OF LIFE.

3. From the right hand of the Eternal Majesty, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us, Christ hath sent His Holy Spirit to be a Teacher, Monitor, and Guide of the souls for which He died, and to dwell in the hearts of men the principle of a new and Divine Life—the bond of re-union between God and man. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."—St. John vi. 63. "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life."—Nicene Creed. "And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."—St. Mark iv. 26, 28. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall

they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."—St. Luke xvii. 20, 21.

SPIRITUAL LIFE IMPARTED TO ALL.

4. This redemption from death, and this consequent gift of life, are as extensive and as universal as the previous condemnation which had come into the world by sin. For as the blessed Saviour came to make an atonement for the sins of all mankind, so likewise He is declared to be "the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—St. John i. 9.

The Apostle, indeed, makes this proposition to be the more certain and inevitable, by arguing that it must, *a fortiori*, be so. He says, "If by the offence of one many be dead, *much more* the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; *much more* they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, *even so might grace reign* through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. v. 15—21.

It is this universality of redemption, and of the capacity of salvation, which truly entitles the revelation of Jesus Christ to be called the Gospel, or "glad tidings of great joy to all people." This was the description which the Angels gave of that which they came to announce, when

* Rev. 5. 2.

at the birth of the Son of God they sang, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

But if the redemption which is in Christ Jesus was provided only for a few, and if the consequent salvation be possible only to that select number, then the message which the Angels brought, would be bad news of great sorrow to all the rest of mankind: and that express declaration of the blessed Saviour himself, that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," would be plainly and flatly contradicted. Our Saviour commanded His Apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; calling all men to repentance and remission of sins, and teaching every man to believe that Christ died for him. But if salvation be not possible to all men, then the ministers and ambassadors of Christ would stand in the name of the God of Truth with a falsehood on their tongues, with which to mock and delude the unhappy sons of perdition.

To this let us only add these Scriptures, "That He by the grace of God might taste death for every man."—Heb. ii. 9. "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."—1 Tim. ii. 1, 3, 4, 5.

But if Christ died for all, how is the benefit of His death applied to all? We have before proved that man, of his own nature, is incapable of thinking, doing, or desiring any good thing; that he is dead to goodness and to God. Redemption from death, therefore, must be something more than the satisfaction made upon the Cross for

the sins of the world. It must include the gift of life—the capacity to know, fear, obey, and love God. This life, this capacity for holiness, is a necessary part of redemption, and is therefore the gift of God to all who are redeemed, to every one for whom Christ died.

Unless this new life from God be a part of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, not only would the death and sacrifice of Christ have been vain and idle, but it would be impossible to bring men into judgment for their conduct in this life. For trust or power, and responsibility, are commensurate and inseparable. Without the first there can be no such thing as the second. Responsibility for wrong necessarily presupposes the capacity to do right. There can be no moral evil where the capacity to do good is denied. This higher life, therefore—the power to apprehend, to love, and to do good—must be superinduced upon human nature as a supernatural gift, in order to make the judgment of men—the acquittal of the righteous and the condemnation of the wicked—a possible thing in the Divine economy.

How then is this new and Divine Life imparted? The answer to this question explains to us the reason for the revelation to man of the adorable mystery of the Holy Trinity. As the Eternal Son became our Redeemer, Mediator, and effectual Intercessor; so, to complete the work which He began, to make effectual for our salvation His sacrifice, mediation and intercession, the Holy Ghost was sent to dwell in the hearts of men; to be the agent of re-union between God and man; to be the source and beginning of that new life from which comes the capacity of holiness, the power to know and to love God, and to obey and love His commands. Therefore the Christian Creed teaches us to believe, not only in the Father Almighty, and

in the Only Begotten Son, but in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life. Therefore it was "*expedient* for us," that, when the sacrificial work of the Son was finished, He should be received into the heavens, and send down from thence, in newness and fullness of power and manifestation, this Divine Source and Author of Life, to abide with men, and to restore them to the lost image of God.*

And, as in the counsels of the Divine economy, the Son was slain from the foundation of the world; that men might be pardoned and accepted for His sake, so was the gift of the Holy Ghost, the purchase of that Son's death and love, made over to mankind from the beginning, that in every man born into the world there might be a capacity for holiness and for heaven.

The Scriptural testimony to this great fact of the indwelling of the Spirit in the hearts of all men in all ages, is emphatic and conclusive. It is not probable that the wickedness of men has ever again reached the point which it had attained at the close of the Antediluvian period. And then we are informed that the Spirit had been unceasingly striving with men for their salvation; and that God was determined to cut off from the earth the hardened sinners with whom He would no longer permit that Spirit to strive and dwell.

That the same Spirit of light and life continued to dwell with men in the ages between the flood and the Advent of Messiah, is abundantly evident, not only from the necessity of the case, because essential to our probationary state, and from the fruits of the Spirit, which at all times were manifested by the sons and daughters of men, but likewise from numerous express notices of the fact in the Old Testament. "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them," is the confession of all the people in Nehem. ix. 20. "Take not

1 Pet. iii. 18.

* See John 1:1-14.

thy Holy Spirit from me," "Stablish me with thy free Spirit," were the prayers dictated by that same Spirit for the use of every one of the people of God. See numerous testimonies to the same effect.

By the agency of this all-pervading Spirit alone can the declaration of the Apostle be true, "that Jesus Christ is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."† St. Paul expressly affirms that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Cor. xii. 7.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness,*" &c. Titus ii. 11, 12. "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." St. John i. 16. "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." St. John iii. 19-21. Here the principle is fully and plainly declared, that there is no condemnation except to those who turn from the light. And as the Apostle had previously announced that the True Light had enlightened every man that came into the world, so the condemnation is as universal as the love and choice of darkness. The parable of the talents conveys in the most striking and forcible manner the same great truth, that no more is required of any man than the use and improvement of that which has been given him.✓

In the Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul thus describes the condition of every man that hath lived in the world: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary, the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." He then

enumerates the works of the flesh, some of which, in various degrees and proportions, have been exhibited in the life of every man. Afterwards he tells us which are the fruits of the Spirit. And of these likewise it may be confidently affirmed, that some of them, as love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, &c., have been beautifully manifested in every human being that has lived. Every good and pure affection that moves the heart of man is the Divine testimony within him to the *New Life* which he has received ; is the earnest of his calling to be the child of God, and the inheritor of everlasting blessedness. If, as has been abundantly proved, man can think, feel, and do no good thing, without the inspiration of God's Spirit, then every good thought, feeling, and act, must of necessity manifest the presence and power of that Spirit. And the condition of every man before God is determined by the choice which each one may make to be guided by the Spirit into all holy obedience, or to be led captive by the flesh in the way of sin and death.

The Scriptures not only in a few passages declare this truth, but everywhere assume it, by appealing to the capacity which is in every human being to know, believe, and obey the truth. "Grieve not the Spirit of God ; Quench not the Spirit ; Harden not your hearts ; Resist not the Spirit ;" is the constant exhortation of the inspired word. The same thing is virtually and fully affirmed by every preacher of the Gospel in the world ; for they exhort and beseech each man to believe that Jesus Christ is his Saviour ; that He hath died for him ; and that he invites and calls this sinner to come unto Him that he may be saved ; and that if he perish it will be his own fault for refusing to heed and obey this call.

This doctrine of the true Gospel, which we have thus

largely proved, alone worthily and sufficiently magnifies the grace of God, "in that it wholly excludes the natural man from having any place or portion in his own salvation, by any acting, moving, or working of his own," but refers all to the quickening and informing power of God's Spirit. And "as it makes the whole salvation of man solely and alone to depend upon God, so it makes his condemnation wholly and in every respect to be of himself." No place is left by this doctrine for the intrusion into Christian theology of the Pelagian and Socinian heresy, which exalts the light of nature, and attributes so much power and influence in the guidance of men to the natural conscience. We have seen that the light of nature in fallen man is nothing but gross darkness. That which has been falsely called such, was the True Light, in whom is Life; "and the Life was the *light* of men; and The Light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

The vice of Pelagianism, that which made this error to be a pernicious and deadly heresy, was its denial of one of the articles of the Creed, that the Holy Ghost is the Author and Giver of all spiritual life. By assuming for man, in his natural state, a capacity to hear, receive, and believe the Gospel, it discharged the Holy Spirit from His peculiar office and operation in the work of human salvation. The doctrine that the Holy Spirit is given to every man, is therefore the precise refutation of Pelagianism: because it takes the very same facts relied upon for the support of that error, and accounts for those facts by proving them to depend upon the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Neither is it the part of the natural conscience to be the *guide* or the *teacher* of men. The Spirit of Truth alone can exercise that prerogative. Natural conscience holds the office of a Judge, seated in the soul of man, and mani-

festing its presence and power only by producing a sense of complacence and pleasure when we do good; and by the application of a scorpion lash to the offender against a known law. But the conscience must itself be rightly instructed in order to know good from evil. This work of instruction the Holy Spirit performs for all men to a certain extent, using for that purpose various external agencies. One of these external agencies employed by the Holy Spirit is the traditional knowledge of right and wrong incorporated in the civil laws, and in the popular religions of all people.

THE DIVINE LIFE AND THE CARNAL LIFE CO-EXIST. THE
CONFLICT BETWEEN THEM.

5th. Our fifth proposition affirms that the Divine Life thus given to every man is a germ, a seed, which does not necessarily, and by the force of the mere gift, destroy and take the place of the carnal nature, but co-exists with that carnal nature, and enters into conflict with all that is evil and depraved in the natural life; and, if properly entertained and nurtured, will ultimately overcome, mortify, and kill all the evil of corrupt nature, and substitute for that evil, purity, goodness, and every Divine affection.

The principle here announced is in direct opposition both to the Romish theory and to the popular theology before noticed. A correct apprehension of it will disabuse the mind of the fallacies of both systems. But it is with the latter that the understandings of the people have been most seriously entangled. Each of these systems looks to a time and place when the new Divine Life is infused into the

soul in fullness of strength and vigor : and this first creation of the new man is represented to be coincident with the destruction of the old and carnal nature. One system fixes the time and place of this great change at Baptism. The other designates the real or supposed conversion of the adult subject as the precise period. The experience of universal humanity contradicts both systems, and coincides with the Gospel teaching, that the carnal and the Divine Life co-exist in every human being ; that a struggle ensues between them, which results in the gradual subjection and ultimate destruction of one or the other ; and that according to the issue of this conflict, upon one side or the other, will be the destiny of each man for heaven or for hell. For each man will go to that place for which, by the character and the issue of this conflict, he is fitted and prepared.

The Gospel conveys to us this all-important truth, in many of its varied forms of instruction ; by parable, analogy, and didactic teaching. The Divine Life in the soul of man is compared to the mustard-seed, which when first put into the ground is less than the least of all seeds, but presently springs up and becomes a tree in which the birds find shelter. It is the little leaven hid in two measures of meal, which gradually penetrates, and by and by leavens the whole mass. It is everywhere illustrated by the nature and condition of the physical system, commencing with an embryo existence, and passing through the varied stages of human growth and development, to the stature and maturity of men and women in Christ Jesus. So apposite is this illustration, and so minutely is it employed, that the very food adapted to the different stages of physical growth, is used to designate the kinds of instruction best fitted for the several stages of development in the Divine Life,—as milk for babes, and strong meat for full grown men.

To the same effect are those comparisons of the Christian state to a race, in which the runner may be hindered, and fail to receive the prize; to a warfare and a battle, in which the champion may be worsted. But in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul fully and plainly sets forth the whole matter. He there describes the condition of man, with the carnal and the Divine nature struggling together within him for the mastery. And he refers the character and the issue of this conflict to the will of man made free by the Spirit of God to choose between good and evil; to submit to the lusts of the old and carnal nature; or to renounce that fatal subjection, and to follow the guidance of the Spirit of light and life. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." When we have made this good and wise choice of the Lord to be our God, and of the Holy Spirit to be our Guide and Teacher, then, mystically, and by profession, we are dead unto sin; and the mortification of the carnal nature begins, and is carried on to its entire destruction. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. viii. 13, 14.

On this, as on every other Christian doctrine, the language of the Prayer-Book is but the echo of the Bible. Art. 9, "Of Original Sin," says, "This infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerate." And Art. 15 declares, "But all we the rest (although baptized and born again in Christ) yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

In the Baptismal Service, the prayer is made for the candidates, "that the old Adam may be so buried that the new man may be raised up in them: that all sinful affections may die in them, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them: that they may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh." The closing exhortation states, "Baptism representeth to us our *profession*, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as he died, and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; *continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections*, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

According to this service, every person rightly baptized is dead unto sin, just as Isaac was dead unto his father when bound and stretched upon the altar, and the arm of the faithful Patriarch raised to execute the command of God. In this instance, Isaac was dead in the purpose and intention of his believing father. He had been wholly and entirely given up. So when the world, the flesh, and the devil, are heartily and sincerely renounced in Baptism, sin is dead to us in our will, purpose, and intention. We are no longer its servants; we no longer submit to its power. But we have chosen the Divine Life—the adoption to be the sons of God—for our condition; the Lord to be our God; and the Holy Spirit to be our Leader and Guide. And we have vowed to wage an unceasing warfare against the carnal nature, the body of sin, *with which we are still oppressed*. The actual death of sin results from the faithful discharge of this vow, from the successful conduct of this warfare. We must so contend as to "triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh." We must "continu-

ally mortify all our evil and corrupt affections." The business and the probation of every man in this world is to carry out, and to bring to full effect, this Baptismal profession: so that, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost working in and with us, we may overcome, mortify, and kill, all the evil of corrupt nature; and substitute for that evil, purity, goodness, and every Divine affection; and (become in all things like unto our Saviour Christ.

The union of the baptized with Christ and His Church, and our consequent relation to God, as His children, and the heirs of eternal life, are all clearly set forth as *accomplished* in Baptism. But no mention is made, no hint is given, of any *moral* sanctification, any moral righteousness, effected, *or begun*, in baptism. On the contrary, the *stipulation* of the several parts of this moral change, to be accomplished *in futuro*, by the aid of the heavenly Grace first bestowed and now increased, and of the new relations now entered upon, *is the very condition imposed upon the baptized persons*. The whole office is framed upon the principle that one service is renounced in will and profession, and another embraced; and that this renunciation on the one hand, and new allegiance on the other, are to be made good by a severe and unintermitted contest. The evil of our own nature to which we were subject is indeed renounced, together with all other evil, in terms of present time. But so far is that evil from being destroyed, and substituted by true holiness and purity, that we only promise that, by "God's help we will *endeavor not to follow nor be led by it*." And after the Baptism we pray that the baptized *may now* "crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin." And again, at the close of the office the baptized are solemnly exhorted—not, to retain that which they have received,—but, to spend the

whole of their lives in striving after that which the Romish theory says has already been accomplished.

The Communion Office of the Church is constructed upon the recognition of the same immutable truth, of the co-existence of the carnal and the Divine nature in the regenerate. And it is utterly irreconcilable with the systems which deny that truth. For it requires every communicant to come to the altar of God with the most humiliating confession of personal guilt and unworthiness. If, therefore, men were made perfectly just and holy, immaculate and without sin, by the Sacrament of Baptism, by the Pseudo Sacrament of Penance, or by the exercises of a revival meeting, then these righteous persons could not lawfully be admitted to the communion of the faithful. For, in order to join that communion, and to partake of the body and blood of Christ, they would be compelled to use a confession which in their case would be false and hypocritical. And all the Liturgies in the world are, and always have been, characterized by this same feature. The universal Church, therefore, has made no provision whatever for the entertainment on earth of this class of persons; for it nowhere recognizes the existence of such a class. The true members of Christ's Church are adopted children of a Heavenly Father, who bears with their waywardness, rebukes their sin, chastens them in his love, instructs their ignorance, calls them to repentance when they go astray, and, while they submit to the guidance of His Spirit, leads them from conquest to conquest over the evil of their nature, and thus reinstates them in the likeness of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

BAPTISM THE NEW BIRTH.

6th. Our sixth proposition affirms that the Church of Christ, with all its appliances of faith and holiness, has been appointed as the last, the fullest, and the most perfect of the means and instrumentalities for the nurture and development of the Divine Life, from its embryo existence as a power in the soul of man, through all the successive stages of growth, to the maturity of perfect manhood in Christ Jesus: and to be introduced into that Church by Baptism is the second birth—the birth of water and of the Spirit.

A clear apprehension of this final proposition, taken in connection with all that has been heretofore proved, will put an end to several mischievous *isms* and logomachies, and will take from true Christian people the source of much painful jealousy and suspicion. But we have no thought of recommending this proposition in a spirit of compromise, as a means of reconciling contending parties. Truth can make no compromise. Unless this proposition be true, it ought not to be received for any purpose. But if it be true, then all should heartily receive it, and rejoice in this additional proof that the truth will make us free from many hurtful delusions.

The Church of Christ is represented to us in Scripture by all those varied figures and illustrations which convey the ideas of unity, nurture, and protection. It is a Garden, and a Vineyard, where the plants are cultivated and tended with unremitting care, in every stage of growth, from the planting of the seed to the fullest maturity of fruitfulness. It is a Sheepfold, where the kindest nurture is applied to the lambs of the flock, and where the care of

the Divine Shepherd is manifested in the tenderest and most affecting manner. It is an Ark, in which a remnant is saved from destruction, and where the food which may sustain life for so long a period is amply provided. It is a Field, in which are the growing plants which have sprung from the seed, and are ripening for the harvest. It is, last of all, and chiefly, a Kingdom, in which is included every age and condition of humanity; and which is put at all points in direct antagonism with the world.

It will be observed that every one of these representations of the Church presupposes the existence of something which has life, to be the subject of nurture and protection. The Garden, the Vineyard, and the Field are but the places where living seeds or plants germinate, grow, and are cultivated. The Ark does not produce, but merely secures and protects its living tenants. The Sheepfold, the City, and the Kingdom, do not bestow life, but simply nurture, protect, and defend the subjects of that life which is derived from a higher source. These representations, therefore, teach us that the Church of Christ is the appointed place in which the Divine Life in the soul of man is to be nurtured, developed, and brought to the maturity and perfection of Christian character, to the full proportions of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. To this effect precisely is the language of the Apostle, describing the purpose of the entire organization of the Church. "He gave apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians iv. 11, 12.

Now as faith in Jesus Christ is the exclusive mean of salvation to those to whom the knowledge of Christ has been sufficiently proposed; and yet the Spirit of God may

effect that salvation in some other way in those to whom this knowledge has not been brought; so the Church of Christ is the exclusive mean of salvation to those to whom it is sufficiently proposed; (he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;) yet the same Holy Spirit may, without the Church, nurture and bring to full maturity the Divine Life in the souls of those to whom the Church, as Christ's institution, has not been sufficiently proposed. But when the Gospel defines the terms of salvation, it speaks, of course, and only, to those who hear the Gospel. It is not addressed to those who cannot hear it; and says nothing, therefore, about the provision which in the Divine economy is made for them.

We are now prepared to appreciate the force, beauty, and expressiveness of the illustration employed by our blessed Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus, to explain the nature of the Divine Life, and the necessity for the introduction of the subject of that life into His Church or Kingdom, by a second birth. That illustration does not differ at all, in the sense and meaning intended to be conveyed, from all the other representations of the same subject which we have already examined.

We have seen that the analogy between the Divine and physical life of man, is frequently introduced in the inspired word, and is carried out to the utmost minuteness of comparison. Now recollect that it has been fully proved that the Divine Life as a germ—the capacity for holiness, the power to know and to do good, to know and to love God—is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to human nature, to every soul that is born into the world. *How this Divine Life is to be nurtured and developed, so as to effect the salvation of its subject, is the purport of our Lord's communication to Nicodemus.*

To convey His meaning, the Saviour here uses the illustration of the physical life of man, so frequently employed in other portions of the Bible. He tells the Jewish ruler that under the new economy, which He came to introduce, every man who would enter into the kingdom of God must be born again; must be introduced into that kingdom as a little child, by a second birth, a birth of water and of the Spirit. The analogy is most forcible and expressive, and has been strangely misunderstood. In entire oblivion of the familiar facts of the case, the *birth* of a child has been confounded with its *life*, and our Lord's words interpreted as if these two things were one and the same. But we know that the birth of a child is the result and consequence of its previous life, not the occasion of that life. It is required to be born because it is a living creature, which, having passed through an embryo existence, must now, *by birth*, be placed in *new relations*, and under the power of new influences and agencies, *adapted to its further and full development and perfection*.

Our blessed Lord understood the force and meaning of the words and illustrations which He employed. When He speaks of a second birth, therefore, He evidently refers to something in the spiritual life analagous to the first or physical birth. As by the first birth the living creature, the natural man, is introduced into the world, in order that it may attain to the perfection of manhood; so, by the second birth, of water and of the Spirit, the new creature, the subject of the Divine Life, is introduced into the Church of God, there to be trained and nurtured, under fitting influences, to the perfection of manhood in Christ Jesus.

Under the Christian dispensation, this new birth of water and of the Spirit is just as essential to the development and

perfection of the Divine Life in the soul of man, as is the birth of a child into the world, from the womb of its mother, essential to the development and perfection of the natural life. The still-born child is born indeed, but derives no benefit from its birth. Only the quick, the living child, must needs be born, in order that it may continue to live and grow by the supply of appropriate sustenance to every power and faculty.

The efficient Agent in this new birth, this incorporation of the subject of the Divine Life into the body of Christ, is the Holy Spirit; "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." 1 Cor. xii. 13. The Holy Ghost is the ever present and only efficient Administrator in all Christian ordinances. By the ministry of the Holy Ghost it is that He, the God-Man, who has ascended into the heavens, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us, is present nevertheless on earth, according to his most sure promise, in the assemblies of his faithful people; is formed in the heart of each believer; feeds, nurtures, and presides over His Church. In like manner the Holy Ghost is the true Minister in the mystery of the second birth. He gives authority to the human minister to act in the name of Christ. He sanctifies the water to the mystical washing away of sin. He comes with new power and more abundant grace into the soul of the new-born, enabling him to carry out the Baptismal profession, and to live according to God's law, and as the adopted child of a Heavenly Father.

When our Divine Master informed Nicodemus of the necessity of this new birth of water and of the Spirit, the Jewish ruler was confounded, as all his countrymen were, at a doctrine so disparaging to the Mosaic economy, and which evidently looked to a termination of the peculiar

privileges of the Jews. As a child of Abraham, he was entitled to enter into that kingdom which God had heretofore established on the earth. In circumcision he received the effectual sign of his admission into that kingdom. He had grown up to be a scribe, and teacher, and ruler in the same. He understood very well how a converted Gentile might be born again into the family and kingdom of God. For the thing itself, and this figurative description of it, were familiar to all the Jews of that day. But that Nicodemus, a Jew, and *a ruler of the Jews*, should be bound to submit to the same great change, seemed to him to be as strange and unnatural as for a grown man to enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born. The same humbling and most unexpected feature of the Christian doctrine, that in the new dispensation the peculiar privileges of the Jew were to be annulled, and that all men alike must submit to the same terms of salvation, hung like a veil before the hearts of the ancient people, and prevented them from seeing the glorious light that was shining in their midst.

/ It was necessary that all men, Jews and Gentiles, should be born again into the new kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in order that the Divine Life in every man should be nourished by Divine grace conveyed to the soul through the instituted channels of that grace. In no other way, under the Christian economy, could that life be sustained, developed, and carried forward through all the stages of growth to the maturity of manhood, to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

In exact accordance with this plain and simple teaching of the Bible is the language of the Prayer-Book. Nowhere is the Divine Life said to be given or begun in Baptism. But the new birth—the introduction into the Church which

is the body of Christ—the solemn adoption to be the children of God—is invariably made to be coincident with that sacrament. And instead of grace being then for the first time imparted, it is positively asserted, in the 27th Article that then “grace is increased.”

Such is Baptismal Regeneration, in the sense of the Bible and the Church. This meaning is the only one that satisfies the language used by our blessed Lord, and corresponds with the physical analogy by which He was pleased to illustrate the mysteries and the doctrines of His kingdom. This meaning, and this alone, agrees with the numerous similitudes in the inspired word, already referred to, by which the Divine Life in the soul of man, and the relation of that life to the Church of God, are at large described. By every one of these similitudes the Church is presented to us as the place and the agency by which the Divine Life previously received is nurtured, sustained and developed. This meaning alone concurs with the analogy of faith, leaving to every other truth of the Gospel its fit and appropriate place. “Make the beginning of the Divine Life in the soul to be in Baptism, or at Conversion, and we will be forced either into Pelagianism,—holding that man in his natural state, without the grace of Christ, can turn, repent, believe, and do good works acceptable to God,—or into the most revolting form of Calvinism,—believing that God created the greater part of mankind under a pre-ordained necessity of damnation, and that in His tenderest offers of mercy to these reprobates, the Just and Holy One does but mock at the involuntary impotence and misery of His creatures.”

Pelagianism must be a consequence of the first supposition, because where there is no spiritual life there can be no capacity to hear, receive, and obey the Gospel; just as

where there is no natural life there is no capacity to receive impressions from external objects. "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 11, 14. If, therefore, there exists in man a power to hear, receive, and obey the Gospel, *independent of the Divine Life imparted by the Spirit of God*, then such power must be inherent in the natural man; which is contrary to the Scriptures just cited, and to the Catholic Faith; and is the very proposition that constitutes the Pelagian heresy. But we know that this power both exists and is exercised in persons unbaptized. Therefore, either the Pelagian heresy must be true, or the theory which makes the beginning of the Divine Life in the soul to be at Baptism, must be false.

The second alternative, fixing the beginning of the Divine Life at the *Conversion* of the adult subject, by inevitable necessity excludes the rest of mankind from the capacity to entertain the offers of salvation, which is the extreme Calvinistic theory. But both of these dogmas are contrary to the Catholic Faith, and must be rejected along with the interpretation of Scripture, which implies both or either of them.

Again, the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, as above explained, is the only view of this subject that corresponds with the phenomena of universal humanity. That the fruits of the Spirit, as enumerated by St. Paul, are exhibited by all men of every nation, at various periods of their lives, and *especially in childhood*, is a simple fact, which the experience of the whole world attests. That the Gospel itself appeals to every human being, with the assumption

that he has previously received a spiritual power and discernment to hear, feel, understand, and obey its admonitions, is apparent to every reader of the Gospel. The Calvinist, indeed, manages to account for these facts by a newly invented distinction of his own between common and special grace; the former being just sufficient to damn its subject, the latter enough to necessitate his salvation: thereby emulating or exceeding the impiety of those Corinthians who undertook to divide Christ the Lord; for this system seeks to divide the Eternal Spirit! But he who asserts that the Divine Life is first and only imparted in Baptism, has not even this miserable shift with which to account for the facts that he cannot deny.

The birth of water and of the Spirit, the introduction of the subject of Divine Grace into the Church and family of God, has been sneeringly called "merely a sort of *external* or *relative* regeneration, a regeneration, of *mere relations and circumstances*," in contradistinction to "an actual regeneration."

Has the Church, then, the mystical body of Christ, fallen so low in the estimation of any of her loyal children, that to be made a member thereof, and the consequent recipient of such great and precious privileges, is considered so slight a thing, and that the words in which this event is described are declared to be "a trifling with very solemn language!"

It is true, indeed, that the natural birth of a child is but a change of *relations*, but that change involves the continued existence and future well-being of its subject. To be changed from a servant of the devil and an heir of death into a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, is a *mere change of relations*. But those relations, on either side, are of the most awful character.

Noah and his family, enclosed in the ark, were in a different relation to the deluge from the rest of the inhabitants of the earth. But *that relation involved the salvation of those by whom it was sustained.*

The truth is, the author of that sentiment did not know the proper, and original, and simple meaning of the word he was using. He conceived of that word only in the sense given to it by the popular theology of dissent. Hence he entirely misapprehended the doctrine of the Church. The principal error of the statement consists in the assumption, that a change of relations is, of necessity, merely formal and external. Such an assumption involves a sad confusion of ideas. No real transaction in the Church of God, done by the command of Christ, and by the ministry of the Holy Ghost, *can be merely formal and external.* A Divine power, an influence for eternity, involving the issues of life and death, are inseparably attached to every sacrament and ordinance of our holy religion. To ascertain the precise virtue and signification of each one of these sacraments and ordinances, is not to eviscerate them of their force, but it is to recognize the sternest responsibility under which Almighty God has placed His creature man; to learn and obey the truth: soberly and diligently discriminating that truth from the fallacies on either hand with which the devil ever seeks to simulate and thereby to discredit and destroy it.

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration—that a man must be born again of water and of the Spirit—that the Church is the appointed medium of salvation to those to whom it is proposed—is emphatically and specifically the great Church doctrine, in contradistinction to all the modern varieties of the loose theology of dissent. In this doctrine is involved many of the contested questions be-

tween these two systems in relation to the Ministry, the Sacraments, and the nature of Faith. It is therefore a fundamental verity—a mode of statement of a truth which is contained in more than one article of the Creed. It asserts and maintains the union which God has established between the power and the form of godliness. It repels at once the wild fanaticism which affects to be so spiritual that it must needs despise and reject the institutions of the Almighty; and the cold rationalism which would discharge the Spirit of God from His effective and essential agency in all the work of man's salvation. The doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, truly understood, keeps together the things which God has joined; sets forth, that, under the Gospel, the operations of the Spirit of God in man's salvation have been connected with the institutions of the Gospel. He, therefore, who describes Baptism as nothing more than a form, or empty sign, as merely a thing of externals, insults and degrades the Gospel of salvation.

Baptism, like all the other institutions of the Gospel, is both corporeal and spiritual. It is "an outward and visible sign," "effectual" to the production of the thing which it signifies. For the Spirit is the true and efficient Administrator of the Sacrament. The Spirit effects the new birth—incorporates the Baptized into the body of Christ—bestows a larger measure of His holy influences adapted to the state and circumstances of the recipient, and continues to give power and efficacy to all the future discipline of the heir of salvation.

When a Churchman, forgetting the essential distinction between Life and Birth, inadvertently confounds these two things, under the name of Baptismal Regeneration, and thus admits in part the specific Romish theory of salvation, and systematically adheres to this definition, he brings a

new and undeserved odium upon the truth; gives occasion to the enemies of that truth to triumph; and, if he continues to be a Churchman, commits himself to many irreconcilable contradictions and inconsistencies.

But the admission of this one point of Romish doctrine is very apt to lead to much further departures from the truth. The errors of Romanism, however inconsistent with the truth held in connection with them, are very consistent with one another. They compose a logical scheme of falsehood, the parts of which are closely woven together. This doctrine, that the Divine Life is first imparted in Baptism, is a seminal and prolific principle of error. The earnest but unbalanced mind, which is once thoroughly committed to the belief of this principle, will be led on, step by step, to the adoption of its dependent falsehoods; until, in despair of reconciling the supposed truths of God with each other, or with the plainest dictates of right reason, the victim of this delusion surrenders himself and all his heaven-derived faculties to the unresisted guidance of ignorant, corrupt, and unprincipled men.

— The doctrine of Christ is not so taught by the Church of Christ. That in Baptism the subjects of Divine Grace receive the seal of their adoption into the family of God; that they are thereby made the acknowledged children of a Heavenly Father, entitled to all the privileges and graces of His household; that they then enter upon a Divinely established course of parental training, by which the corruption of their nature is to be purged away; by which, when they sin, they are to be chastened, rebuked, and summoned to the healthful discipline of repentance, with the full and unqualified assurance of the favor and loving kindness of their Heavenly Father when they do repent: that the abiding presence and effective power of the Holy

Ghost to carry on this training, and make it effectual to salvation, is abundantly vouchsafed to its subjects: this is the teaching of the Church of Christ; this is the way of salvation to which she points the redeemed of the Lord; this is the blessed condition, the glorious distinction, of the Baptized children of God.

The same Church calls upon every human being to hear and obey the Spirit of God speaking within him. Every good thought and desire, every pure and holy affection that stirs the heart of man, is the witness of the presence of that Spirit, and of His power to sanctify and save. He who refuses to be led by this Divine Spirit of light and life into all holy obedience, fatally sins against the Holy Ghost, and consigns himself to the perdition that must ensue.

And now, dear reader, make this one practical and pregnant application of all that we have been learning together. Remember that you are not to postpone the work of your salvation until the Spirit is bestowed upon you at some future period. For that Spirit, if not grieved away, already dwells within you. (Follow its guidance, and you shall be led to holiness here, and to heaven hereafter.) You are not to look for a future beginning of the Divine Life in your soul. That life exists already, rendering you capable of knowing and of obeying the truth. That life, by your care and diligence in the use of the appointed means of grace, is to be nurtured and nourished to the full maturity of the Christian character, and to a meetness for heaven and eternal joys; or by your neglect and sin, that life is to be extinguished, and your soul sunk into the darkness of an endless death. If heretofore you have refused to permit that life to be sustained by the heavenly nutriment of Divine grace, and have suffered sin to remain in your mortal

body, then you must be *converted* and live, or you must perish in your iniquity with an everlasting destruction.

CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THIS VIEW OF THE
DIVINE LIFE AND THE NEW BIRTH.

Most of the objections to the view presented in the foregoing discussion are founded upon various figures of speech employed in Scripture inconsistent with the language in which that view is presented. It is very strange that so large a portion of religious controversy consists of a determined effort to force together inconsistent figures of speech, and to make them agree as different parts of the same representation. If this is a vice in rhetoric, it is a much more serious wrong in argument. A large part of the Bible is necessarily a representation of spiritual truths by the aid of material and sensible images. A great variety of illustrations are employed for the purpose of conveying the same truth; and sometimes a single illustration is used in different places in order to convey different truths. The application of the figure must, in every case, be determined by the subject matter and by the context. But the figures, the illustrations, are not doctrines, are not truths, which must be made to fit together and adjust themselves into a consistent system. Different figures to express the same truth, must necessarily be inconsistent and incongruous with one another, while the truths represented by those figures are identical. One of the passages adduced by several persons, as a refutation of the principle that the Divine Life is given to every man, presents a striking proof of the position just mentioned. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ

shall give thee light." Here, in the ardor of composition, the inspired writer throws together three utterly incongruous images, for the purpose of conveying two very important and perfectly accordant truths. First, the person addressed is said to be asleep, which presupposes life; then he is described as dead; and after he has risen from the dead, he is told that he shall receive light. To reconcile these images would of course be impossible. To treat them as substantive doctrines, and try to compose them into a system, would make a wretched confusion. But there is no difficulty at all in apprehending the truths conveyed by this forcible and lively language.

The words Life and Death, and their cognate terms, as, to be begotten, to be born, to be crucified, to be buried, are all used in the Bible, in a great variety of significations, and to express the most diverse truths. It is impossible to bring these figures together, and make a good rhetorical sentence, or a consistent logical system out of them. They were not designed to be used in any such way. But it is very easy to ascertain the particular truth conveyed in each instance by the use of these terms, and compose these truths together into a consistent and harmonious system.

One object of the preceding discussion has been to ascertain the precise truth conveyed by our Lord, in his conversation with Nicodemus, under the figure of a New Birth. The great importance of that inquiry arose from the fact, that the Church has incorporated the illustration, and the truth conveyed by it, together, into the most solemn of her formularies. For the ministers and members of the Church to be constantly using these formularies, and attaching to them a different meaning, is a fruitful source of jealousy and suspicion. In ill-governed minds,

where passion and prejudice get the better of judgment and charity, these feelings frequently break forth into loud and angry denunciation, thus bringing scandal upon the Church, and doing great injury to religion.

To determine the precise meaning which our blessed Lord, and the Church adopting his language, designed to convey by the image of a New Birth, does not fix the same meaning to the same figure, when used in a different connection in other parts of the inspired word. On the contrary, it has been shown that, to be born of God, is used elsewhere in a very different sense, viz., to express that practical living under the power of the Divine Life, which by St. Paul is described as being "led by the Spirit." But to determine accurately the sense in which this illustration was employed by our Saviour, and in which it has been incorporated by the Church into her formularies, from the earliest time, does fix the strict, theological meaning of this language; and this meaning should be faithfully adhered to whenever those formularies are examined or explained, if theological science and parochial instruction are to be any thing better than a Babel of confusion and of misconstruction.

The same principles of construction apply to those other very common and emphatic terms—Life and Death. They are used in the greatest variety of ways to express the most opposite states. In the Epistle to the Romans this imagery is lavishly employed in meanings which are constantly interchanging. Thus, the prevalence of a carnal life, the state of a wicked man, is sometimes called death, sometimes life; and the prevalence of the Divine Life, the state of a good man, is called in one connection, death, in another, life. The context determines the meaning in each instance. When in any one of these instances we

have ascertained the particular truth announced by the apostle, it would be a very singular objection to that truth to allege that the apostle had expressed a very different meaning by the use of the same illustration in another place! But this is the precise force of the objection to the truths herein set forth concerning the Divine Life and the New Birth.

The method which I have adopted in order to determine the precise meaning of the phrase New Birth, as used by our Lord, and in the formularies of the Church, was to prove *aliunde*, from other parts of the Divine word, and of the teachings of the Church, the truth of certain propositions. Then it was shown that the easiest, simplest, and most literal interpretation of the illustration under examination assumed a portion of these truths, and expressed the remainder. The sense of the illustration thus ascertained, was further shown to be closely analogous to the very purpose for which the same figure was familiarly employed by the Jews of our Lord's time; and that this same sense had been continuously given to it in every age of the Church.

This whole argument may be very faulty, and capable of easy refutation, but I submit that it is no answer at all to cite passages either from the Bible or from eminent Christian writers, in which similar imagery is employed to express other truths.

It is very true, as Hooker says, that "the first apparent beginning of life, (spiritual life) is in that Baptism which both declareth and maketh us Christians," just as the first apparent beginning of natural life is at birth. And this easily accounts for all the expressions that may be cited, referring to natural birth, and to new birth, as the beginning, respectively, of the natural and of the Divine Life.

But this does not alter the fact that life existed in each case before ; and that it was the assumed existence of that previous life upon which our Saviour founded His illustration of a birth by water and the Spirit, of a child of God into the kingdom or Church of God.

I have acknowledged that it is incumbent on him who affirms the entire completeness and closeness of the analogy between natural and supernatural birth, to show, in some instances at least, the existence of the Divine or Spiritual life anterior to that " apparent beginning of life " which takes place in Baptism. That is, it must be proved that there is a *reality* corresponding to this feature of the illustration. If this is shown, then, the whole truth set forth by this expressive and beautiful illustration is fully maintained, and one vicious theory is refuted. If again, it can be shown that this Divine or Spiritual life exists anterior to what is popularly termed conversion, then another mischievous error is put aside. The whole question then turns upon the truth or falsehood of this proposition : " The Holy Spirit is given to every man to be in him the principle of a new and Divine life. " I must refer to the arguments already adduced in support of this proposition. I will here only mention one or two additional considerations.

By the Divine Life, I mean a capacity given by the Spirit of God to discern, to love, and to do the things which the natural man, according to Scripture, can neither discern, love, or perform. The existence of life can only be shown by the phenomena of life. In order to prove the existence of life, it is not necessary that all the phenomena proper to sound and vigorous life should be manifested. The blind, the deaf, and the paralyzed, are alive, although some of the manifestations of life are wanting in them. So

in regard to spiritual life. The existence of any of the phenomena of which the natural man is declared to be incapable, and which are declared in the Scriptures of truth to be the fruits of the Spirit, manifests the existence of Spiritual or Divine Life. What other test can we apply? Must all the phenomena of healthful and vigorous life be exhibited in each instance before we will allow that life exists at all? Must a sinner have perfected holiness before it is admitted that he has received any portion of the Spirit of God? If a man has failed to subdue any unruly temper, shall we, therefore, deny that he has received any grace?

The Scriptures affirm, generally, that the natural man is incapable of any good.^x It asserts, positively and unequivocally, that certain virtues are the fruits of the Spirit.^{+ 24. 31-33} Shall we venture to affirm in direct contradiction to these declarations, that man is, by nature, his perverted nature, capable of good? Shall we say of those very virtues enumerated as fruits of the Spirit, that, nevertheless, they are not fruits of the Spirit, but the operations of a carnal and corrupted nature? Unless Scripture can be thus flatly contradicted, it must be held as demonstrated, that every man has received the Divine as well as the carnal life. For all men do both good and evil.* And the actual con-

* The able author of an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, for October 1853, on "Church Parties," fully asserts this principle, and refutes an objection to it. Quoting the "Recordite Party" as maintaining, "If a man be not a believer his virtues are nothing better than splendid sins," the Reviewer says, in a note, "The Recordite party justify this assertion by appealing to the 13th Article, which declares that 'works done before grace have the nature of sin.' But this proposition, if interpreted in the Puritanic sense, would contradict the inspired declaration, that the prayers and alms of the heathen Cornelius were acceptable to God. (Acts x. 4, 35.) The true meaning of the Article is only

That the works of the flesh are not acceptable to God.
1st. 1st. 2d. 3d. 4th. 5th. 6th. 7th. 8th. 9th. 10th. 11th. 12th. 13th. 14th. 15th. 16th. 17th. 18th. 19th. 20th. 21st. 22nd. 23rd. 24th. 25th. 26th. 27th. 28th. 29th. 30th. 31st. 32nd. 33rd. 34th. 35th. 36th. 37th. 38th. 39th. 40th. 41st. 42nd. 43rd. 44th. 45th. 46th. 47th. 48th. 49th. 50th. 51st. 52nd. 53rd. 54th. 55th. 56th. 57th. 58th. 59th. 60th. 61st. 62nd. 63rd. 64th. 65th. 66th. 67th. 68th. 69th. 70th. 71st. 72nd. 73rd. 74th. 75th. 76th. 77th. 78th. 79th. 80th. 81st. 82nd. 83rd. 84th. 85th. 86th. 87th. 88th. 89th. 90th. 91st. 92nd. 93rd. 94th. 95th. 96th. 97th. 98th. 99th. 100th.
Exodus 20. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.
James 3. 2.

dition of every man is, according to the life he cultivates, a gradual progress towards the ascendancy of the good or evil that is in him; until, in the one case, he is prepared for the communion of the just in heaven, or, in the other, fitted for the society of the accursed in hell.

The affections of man are not like the instincts of brutes, fixed, unalterable, and destitute of a moral quality. When God bestowed upon the animal creation the affections essential to their being and enjoyment, He did not bestow likewise the moral freedom which could make them capable of responsibility, and enable them to pervert His gifts, and to forfeit His favor. These affections, therefore, are in them neither good or evil. But in man these same affections have a moral quality. They are either good or evil. These affections are to be brought into judgment—to be the subjects of reward or punishment. How the affections of a corrupted creature can be evil it is easy to understand. But the source of their goodness it would be hard to determine, unless we admit the Christian doctrine that this goodness proceeds from the Almighty—that it is the direct dictate and influence of God's Spirit bestowed upon every man as the inestimable purchase of Christ's most precious blood. Unless the Spirit of God be given to enable man to "do righteousness," how can he be judged for a failure to do that of which he is naturally incapable? If man has not received from God the power to do good, to walk uprightly,

that Divine Grace, and Human Goodness are co-extensive; so that where there is no Grace there is no Goodness, and conversely, that wheresoever there is Goodness there is Grace. Thus the virtues of Socrates are not denied, but only ascribed to their true source. Whereas in the Puritanic view (which unhappily was adopted by some of the continental Reformers) they are denied to be virtues at all: and thus the very foundations of all religious evidence, the axiomatic ideas of morality, are cut away."—p. 145.

to obey the law, then there can be no moral quality in his actions. They are neither good or evil. This power must either be a natural endowment, derived from the original creation, and never forfeited or lost; or it must be a supernatural gift bestowed through Jesus Christ, for His sake, and on account of the virtue of His sacrifice and mediation. The first of these alternatives is the assertion of Deism and Pelagianism. The second is the Christian doctrine. I can see no room or place for any third alternative.

These are general considerations which coincide with all the scriptural authorities to the same effect heretofore quoted. Let us see another scriptural testimony to the same purpose. St. Paul frequently describes the most eminent operations of the Spirit as the "Circumcision of the heart." Now this very circumcision of the heart was a substantive part of that ancient covenant of which, not Baptism, but outward circumcision was the seal. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the hearts of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."—Deut. xxx. 6. In the epistle to the Romans, this spiritual circumcision is plainly extended to the Gentiles. For although they had not been favored with the written law of Moses, yet they had a law written on their hearts, and they had received spiritual power to recognize and obey that law, as is fully implied by the apostle when he said, "Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?"—"for circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter"—Rom. ii. 26, 29. This is evidently the foundation of the previous declaration in the same chapter, that "the judgment of God is according to truth, who will render to every man according to his deeds; unto them

that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile."

In the preceding chapter, the apostle affirms in three distinct places, that the Gentiles had been "given up," or "given over," to a reprobate mind, because of their deliberate wickedness and impenitence. How could the Almighty "give up" those whom He had never tried to lead in the way of righteousness? How could He "give over to a reprobate mind" those who had never resisted His spirit? The apparent sense of the terms, and the analogy of faith here equally impel us to the same conclusion.

When we add to all this weight of scripture testimony, the undoubted fact so dwelt upon and reiterated in the New Testament, that Cornelius had found favor with God, and had manifested the most precious fruits of the Spirit before he ever heard the Gospel; and that even the miraculous gifts of the same Spirit were conferred upon him and his friends before they were baptized, it seems to me that the position now maintained is incontrovertibly established from the word of God. And when again we find the great body of heathen moralists using and anticipating the very language in which St. Paul describes the conflict within himself, between the good and evil principle, between the spiritual and the carnal nature, it is passing strange that any Christian man should ever have questioned this proposition. The authors of the Westminster Confession were far too learned a body of theologians to attribute to the natural man the good which they acknowledged to be in all men. They referred that good undoubtingly, to the

Spirit of God; but, under the influence of their peculiar views, they called it "some common operations of the Spirit."

That grace is given before Baptism generally in the case of adults, is placed beyond a question by the united voice of Scripture and the Church, requiring the most eminent fruits of the Spirit as antecedents to Baptism.

The proposition thus fully proved, that every man has received the Holy Spirit, to make him capable of holiness, and therefore responsible for unholiness, is a complete vindication of the illustration used by our blessed Lord, and by the Church continuously since, to express the operation and effect of Baptism, viz: that it is a New Birth, the introduction by water and the Spirit of a living subject from the womb of nature into the Church or kingdom of God. This is precisely what Hooker meant when he said: "Each Sacrament having both that which is general or common, and that also which is peculiar to itself, we may hereby gather that the participation of Christ which properly belongeth to any one Sacrament, is not to be obtained otherwise than by the Sacrament wherunto it is proper." The 27th Article tells us what is that grace or "participation of Christ" which is *proper* to Baptism. "Baptism is a sign of regeneration or New Birth, whereby as by an instrument they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church." Here "Regeneration," "New Birth," and "grafting into the Church," are used as convertible terms, and Baptism is declared to be both the sign of the thing thus represented, and *the instrument* by which it is effected. The remainder of the Article makes Baptism to be both a *sign* and a *seal*—that is, the assurance—of some other blessings.

It will not do to degrade this Divinely conceived and

appointed institution, by calling it "a mere ecclesiastical rite, which man alone is quite competent to achieve." The Church is not a society of human appointment, but the mystical body of Christ, established by grace. Union with this body can only be obtained by the operation of the Holy Ghost, whose power is in various ways exerted in order to constitute the Sacrament. And when this union is effected, the same Holy Spirit of life and light flows *through many channels* into the soul of the member of Christ. "*Man alone*," therefore, can do nothing in regard to this Divine society. It is all of Grace. And on this account it is that the question of the *Divine* as opposed to the *human* institution of the Church, its Sacraments, and its Ministry, is of such transcendent importance.

PRACTICAL VALUE OF THESE TRUTHS.

The conclusion at which we have now, by patient examination arrived, is no mere abstract theory of religion for the exercise of the intellect, and for the gratification of idle curiosity. It is a practical truth of the most momentous consequence: a truth which is verified in part by the consciousness of every human being; and which is witnessed in all its saving and consoling efficacy, by all who have unreservedly submitted themselves to the power of God for their salvation.

I appeal, now, not to any external authority whatever, but to the heart and consciousness of every man, and ask you; if you have not felt at all times the struggle within yourselves of the antagonist forces which we have been considering? Have you not experienced the power of corrupt nature inciting you to evil; and the gentle influence

of a better monitor persuading you to resist the evil, and to walk in the path of uprightness? We have seen that the word of God, and right reason, combine to assure us that this better monitor dwelling within you, is the Holy Spirit of life and light—"the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." You have therefore within you at once the sentence of condemnation against iniquity, and the earnest of your calling to a life of purity, and to a heritage of bliss. The blessed Bible in its highest meaning, is but the interpreter of these mysteries of your being. It is for you to confirm and ratify the sentence of condemnation which you feel within you, and which you read in God's word, and thus to consign yourselves to an eternal night of hopeless woe; or, to make your calling and election sure, to own your adoption to be the children of God, and to live according to that high and holy relation, and thus to secure that exceeding great reward which your Father in heaven has promised to bestow.

By the recognition of these solemn truths, and by the faithful performance of your duty as created by them, you will at once obey the gracious exhortation, and prove the truth of the consoling assurance, so happily combined in the word of God, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." That your salvation is the "good pleasure" of your heavenly Father, He has declared with a soul-subduing emphasis of expression which infinite love and power could not surpass. The mission, the sufferings, the death of the Son of God, tell the story of redeeming love—declare the "good pleasure" of an Almighty Father whose compassions fail not, and whose tender mercies are over all His works. He, by His Spirit works in you to desire and to will the accomplishment of

“His good pleasure.” But he does not work in you irresistibly. You must yield to His solicitations. You must submit to be led by the Spirit. You must work together with God. Then He will work in you to *do* as well as to *will*. Therefore, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, indeed, lest you fail to do your part, but with joy and confidence, that it is God that worketh in you. That infinite love and Almighty power are pledged to accomplish the “good pleasure” of your heavenly Father, for all who work together with Him.

This work is no holiday pastime. It is not the easy way of salvation, which encourages a man to continue in sin for the greater portion of his life, to add to the evil of corrupt nature the grosser evil of more corrupt habits; and then, when “a convenient season” arrives, when he is tired of the world, or the world begins to be tired of him, to leap at once from uncleanness to holiness, by the magical power of some wild, delirious excitement, or by a single effort of enlightened will.

To subdue the evil of corrupt nature, to reinstate man in that image of God from which he has fallen, is according to the ordinary economy of Grace, the work and labor of the whole life. The Church, as represented by all the analogies which we have heretofore collected from the Word of God, as “the garden,” “the field,” “the vineyard,” “the ark,” “the city,” “the kingdom,” embraces the ordinary agencies and influences by which the Spirit works in us, and by which we work together with God for the accomplishment of this great result. Therefore it is that children should be brought to Baptism in earliest infancy, because this blessed work of the soul’s renewal in the likeness of God should be begun when corrupt nature can be taken at the greatest disadvantage. Then it is that

the parent, by a holy discipline, must work together with God for his child, as in after life the child must work together with God for himself. And all who have studied the character of young children, know well that Grace is then most powerful to produce that purity of mind and holiness of affection, which induced the blessed Saviour to say: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The mischievous theory which denies this work of Grace upon the infant mind, which turns the young heir of salvation forth into the world, a stranger and an alien to its father's home, looking for grace only to some yet distant operation of the Spirit, gives time and opportunity for corrupt nature to rally. The Devil sees his advantage, and does not fail to profit by it. He comes and takes possession; and the result is that carelessness and impiety of a more advanced period of youth, which in so many cases is to ripen into the hardness and reprobacy of a settled, determined wickedness.

If that which we have seen to be the *ordinary* way of God's working for the salvation of His redeemed, be neglected or defeated by the unfaithfulness of man, then the difficulty and uncertainty of obtaining this salvation by other and extraordinary means, adapted by the Almighty to this exigency of our condition, are constantly increasing, in a ratio which it is fearful to contemplate. Therefore, every one who desires to be saved, and who nevertheless refuses to begin to work out his salvation in the way that God has appointed him, is putting every day a stronger seal to his own damnation.

The account which has now been given of the way of salvation, is the best refutation that I can make of that foolish, wanton slander, sometimes preferred against the holy Church of God, that she teaches men to rely upon the

mere formal use of the means of Grace, having no regard to the state and affections of the soul, or to the transforming power of God's Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it has been shown that *salvation* and *holiness* are indissolubly bound together, and may be almost interchangeably used. And there is no vice against which our Ministers so frequently warn their people, as against that insidious and inveterate evil of the human heart, the tendency to rest in the *form*, without seeking for and securing the *power* of Godliness: telling them that those who do so lightly and sacrilegiously, trifle with Divine and eternal things, will but increase their own condemnation. We do earnestly teach them that the wickedness which is sought to be covered over by a loud and obtrusive profession of religion, is of all others the vilest and most loathsome.

Having thus presented to every man a motive to be instant and urgent in the work of his own salvation, I will now conclude by another practical illustration and application of the whole subject, in an address to parents from one of the best and most eminent of our early Divines—the famous Bishop Jewell:—

“Let us look upon our children as upon the great blessings of God. They are the Lord's vessels ordained to honor; let us keep them clean. They are Christ's lambs and sheep of his flock; let us lead them forth into wholesome pasture. They are the seed-plot of heaven; let us water them that God may give the increase. Their angels behold the face of God; let us not offend them. They are the temples and tabernacles of the Holy Ghost; let us not suffer the foul spirit to possess them, and dwell with them. God saith, ‘Your children are my children.’ They are the sons of God. They are born anew, and are well shapen in beautiful proportion; make them not monsters:

he is a monster whosoever knoweth not God. By you they are born into the world; be careful also that by your means they may be begotten unto God. You are careful to train them in nurture and comely behaviour of the body; seek also to fashion their mind unto godliness. You have brought them unto the fountain of Baptism, to receive the mark of Christ; bring them up in knowledge, and watch over them that they be not lost. So shall they be confirmed; and will keep the promise they have made, and will grow unto perfect age in Christ."

CHAPTER X.

PROBATION AND REPROBATION.

TRUTH is always composed of antagonizing principles. The characteristic of all heresy is, to run out a single great principle, unchecked and uncontrolled by its antagonist principle, to the production of results that are monstrous and destructive. The Divine arrangement, and the human perversion of it, are finely illustrated by the muscular system of the human body. If but one set of muscles were kept in play, their action would produce only frightful deformity, and utter imbecility as to any useful purpose. But when the action of these is duly counteracted by the compensating force of antagonist muscles, the result of their combination is beauty, proportion and strength.

Calvinism is an illustration of the vice just referred to. It takes a single truth, and runs it out very logically to the most disastrous consequences, without recollecting, that the truth thus unreasonably pressed to such fearful consequences is, itself, controlled and modified by counter-acting and antagonist truths.

The view which has now been presented of the Divine Life in the soul of man, shows the consistency and connection of the one truth of Calvinism with other great and important truths, thereby presenting the beauty and proportion of the glorious gospel—the system in which the Church has ever instructed her faithful children.

It is true, as Calvinism asserts, that the death which sin brought into the world is a state of excision from God, the Fountain of all good, and may, therefore, very properly be called a state of "total depravity." The denial of this truth, by the opponents of Calvinism, is one cause of the continued vitality of that system. But Calvinism takes this one truth, and runs it out to conclusions as manifestly false as they are painfully revolting. Leaving out of view the connected truths which modify and control this single truth, it represents the *actual present condition* of all mankind, as one of "total depravity," of utter incapacity to think or to do any good thing. But this conclusion is contradicted, alike by the phenomena of universal humanity, and by the spirit and the letter of revealed religion. The natural state of man is that, indeed, to which he reduced himself—a state expressed by the terms, "spiritual death," "total depravity," or by any other equivalent terms. But man was not left in this, his natural condition of hopeless misery and ruin. Calvinism forgets that we are now living under the dispensation of GRACE. To the same common ancestor, whose transgression brought upon his race this death and this pollution of human nature, *was the promise made of Redemption through Jesus Christ.* It is the grace given, the new life imparted through this mediator—the second Adam—to co-exist with the old, and carnal, and corrupt nature which we derive from the first Adam, and to operate upon that nature, to the utter extinction of its vileness and guiltiness, that constitutes *the present condition of mankind a state of probation, of trial.*

Take away the fact, that the Spirit of God imparts to the human race that spiritual capacity to know and to do good, which, in consistency with the illustration of the New Birth employed by our Lord, is, properly called, "the Divine

Life," and this world is no longer a place of probation—of trial for man. It can be regarded as nothing more than a sort of "prison-bounds," in which the reprobate are permitted to wander about, and to do as much mischief as they can, until God puts an end to this dreadful liberty.*

But the great truth of revealed religion, that which justly entitles the truth, as it is in Jesus, to be called THE GOSPEL—the glad news—is, that every man, through Christ, is in a state of probation, of trial, for heaven, or for hell. The corrupt nature and the Divine gift co-exist in every man, and by the choice which he makes and maintains, to be led by the one or the other, is his destiny for eternity determined. Calvinism and Universalism alike and equally, deny the great truth of man's *probation in this world for an eternal state*; and both systems are therefore hopelessly at variance with Divine revelation, and with human consciousness.

By virtue of the dispensation of grace, under which human nature is now placed—the gift of God in Christ operating upon corrupt nature—no man is "totally depraved," until he makes himself so, by long continuance in sin, by deliberate rejection of the grace of God, by driving from his soul the Holy Spirit, the source of all the good that is in man. "Let us further illustrate the distinction between the state to which man reduced himself, and that to which he has been restored by the mediation of Christ. Devils are both condemned and reprobate, or 'totally

* See a beautiful account of this world as a place of "probation" and not "a prison-house for man," in the work mentioned below. "Besides the traces of original beauty and subsequent destruction, there are proofs of Reconstruction or Reorganization." *McCosh on the Divine Government, &c.*, pp. 78—85.

depraved.' No provision is made, so far as we know, for their recovery to holiness and the love of God.

"Suppose we were on a steamboat. A child falls into the river. Some man, under the impulse of a generous emotion, plunges into the water and saves the child at the hazard of his own life. We instinctively approve the act. We do so independently of, and antecedent to, any reasoning. But now suppose a devil to have been present, and to have witnessed this deed of noble daring. Would he have approved the act? would it have pleased him? No! As a natural consequence of the condition of condemned and reprobate spirits, without any provision for their recovery, devils have no perception of the character and attributes of God, which can ever win them to the love of God, or induce a willing submission to his government. There is in them no spiritual capacity to perceive or relish what is pleasing, or acceptable to God. *And such had been the spiritual condition of mankind*, but for the undertaking of Christ, not only condemned, but reprobate, and consequently in a state in which they must have made continual progress in deterioration, and plunged deeper and deeper into the abyss of misery forever. For to be cut off from all communion with God, the source of all goodness and happiness, is, to an immortal spirit, *death*, in the most awful meaning of the term. But it pleased the Father of mercies, that man should not so perish; but by an expedient, which could have emanated only from a wisdom that is unsearchable, and from the promptings of a love that is infinite and unspeakable, God determined that man should have the opportunity of profiting by a state of reprieve, and be placed on new and acceptable terms of obedience. This expedient involved the incarnation of the Son of God, and the sacrifice of his death in our nature, which had offended.

The salvation of man was, in consequence, to depend, not upon the righteousness of his own works, as a ground of justification, but upon the righteousness of faith in the merits and works of the Son of God. And now the very first blessing which results from this arrangement, is *the restoration of man's spiritual capacity*. There is that in him, the gift of God in Christ, which enables him to perceive, and perceiving, to love and venerate the perfections of God; which qualifies him to receive instruction, and when instructed, and according to the measure of instruction, to determine in his own mind, at the instant of performing any action, whether he is doing right or wrong. This, by some, is called moral sense—by others, conscience—by Solomon, 'the candle of the Lord.' By whatever name you please to call it, it is that restoration of a *spiritual capacity* by which the moral character of man is made susceptible of improvement, and it is the free, unmerited gift of God in Christ to man—to every human being endowed with a rational soul.”*

The term “Divine Life,” in contradistinction to corrupt nature, is employed to express this *spiritual capacity*, imparted to every man, to know and to do good, in precise conformity to the figure of a new birth, as applied by our Saviour and by the Church to baptism. This use of the term Divine Life, *in this connection*, is necessary, *in order to illustrate the meaning and to exhibit the force of the figure thus used by our blessed Lord*.

I cannot refrain from furnishing here the testimony to the same truth of another illustrious witness, the late Rev. Samuel Farmar Jarvis, D. D., LL. D. In a letter to me,

* From an unpublished Sermon of the Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, D. D., the Bishop of Tennessee.

dated February 4th, 1851, a few weeks before his death, and probably the last letter he ever wrote, he says:—

“I am sure it will gratify you, as it has gratified me, to find that your views of the Divine life in the soul of man are fully supported in my history. Permit me to call your attention in particular to p. 12, that *all* the descendants of Adam and Eve WERE BORN UNDER THE GOSPEL COVENANT, and consequently had the Divine life given them through Jesus Christ; and to the striving of the Holy Ghost, p. 17, and note to Gen. vi. 3. I might refer to many other parts which support your doctrine fully; and, therefore, as far as history could with propriety enter into doctrine, will be found serviceable to you. Is it not strange to see how theories bias men’s minds? Pelagianism denying the prevenient grace of God. Romanism doing in effect the same thing. Calvinism limiting the grace of God and the extent of human redemption. How admirably does the Catholic Church, as exhibited in the teachings of the Prayer-book, show forth that clear and steady light of the Gospel which blends all into the harmony of truth.”

The plain and perspicuous statement of the truth by this venerable and distinguished scholar, but expresses the profound convictions of the able men of his day—the Fathers of the American Church.* The recognition of the great

* The late Rev. Dr. Daniel Burrhans, of venerable memory, took the warmest interest in the effort of the Author to reinstate this great principle of the Gospel in its proper place in the estimation of Churchmen. At the age of 88, he commenced a correspondence with me on the subject, which was continued occasionally until his death. In one of these letters, he says, referring to Dr. Jarvis, “That my late and venerable friend of sacred memory should set his seal in the hour of death to the truth of the Divine Life in man, I consider altogether Providential, and designed to disperse the intervening clouds that have obscured the Light of Lights. It is a truth that must and will pre-

gift of God—the Divine Life in the soul of man—rescues that important truth, the entire corruption of human nature, from the unhappy connections with which it has been too often confused, and by which it has been discredited. But unless we connect with that great Scriptural truth, the *universal gift*, through Christ, of the Spirit of life and light, to operate upon depraved humanity, we take away the only possible ground on which to base the appeals which the Ministers of the Gospel are commanded constantly to make to the hearts and consciences of men, unconverted and unbaptized, to turn unto the Lord, to believe, to repent, to pray. We take away, at the same time, the only ground upon which the Saviour of men can judge the world in righteousness, viz., that the subjects of His Grace have improved, or buried, *the talent entrusted to them*.

This universal gift is repeatedly mentioned by St. Paul in his epistles to the Corinthians. The persons there addressed were quite as miscellaneous in their moral characters as any modern congregation that can be found. Many of them, therefore, yet needed Conversion. And the sorrowing Apostle expresses his fears that after all his written exhortations, he will yet be humbled when he comes to them by finding “many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness which they have committed.” 2d Cor. xii. 21. To a community comprising many such persons he appeals as follows: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in

vail, to the sending back Calvinism to the shades of Manicheism, from which Austin introduced it in his dispute with Pelagius.”

This doctrine was powerfully expressed by the lamented Flavel Mines in describing his own escape from darkness to light.

you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?" "What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 1st Cor. iii. 15, 16; vi. 15, 19; 2d Cor. xiii. 5.

The "hypothetical theory" will not do here. St. Paul negatives that, by describing the wicked lives of those whom he exhorts to repentance; and he urges them to repent because they are the temples of God, because they are members of Christ, and because the Holy Ghost dwells in them. The assertion that Christ is in them, and that the Holy Ghost is in them, are evidently used convertibly for the statement of the same fact. And this fact the Apostle says is true of all who are not "*reprobates*." But by virtue of the dispensation of grace, under which human nature is now placed, no man is reprobate until he makes himself so, by deliberate rejection of the grace of God, by driving from his soul the Holy Spirit, the source of all the good that is in man. The actual present state of human nature, through the mediation of Christ, and by the gift of His Spirit, is that of Probation, not of Reprobation.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ROMISH DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM CONSIDERED MORE PARTICULARLY.

THE Papal religion is a new one, built upon the foundation of Christianity, and gradually, elaborately, and ingeniously constructed. The use made of Christianity by the defenders of this new religion is, to employ the former as a support to the latter, to give it power, credit, and the apparent force of truth. One of the most common arts of Romish controversialists is, to prove, with great force and vigor, some truth of Christianity, and then, under cover of that proof, put forward the modern corruption by which this very truth has been disfigured and overlaid. The Romish doctrine of Baptism is one of those first and easy departures from the truth, which has been logically expanded into a formidable system of error. The following extracts from the decrees of the Council of Trent, will exhibit this doctrine :—

“Whoever shall affirm that the Sacraments of the new law do not contain the grace which they signify; let him be accursed.” “Sacraments of the Church by which *all true righteousness is at first imparted*, then increased, and afterwards restored if lost.” “Whoever shall deny that the merit of Jesus Christ is applied, both to adults and infants by the sacrament of Baptism—that the guilt of

original sin is remitted by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, bestowed in Baptism; or shall affirm that wherein sin truly and properly consists is not *wholly rooted up*, but is only cut down or not imputed; let him be accursed."

"The causes of justification are these—the instrumental cause, the sacrament of Baptism, which is the sacrament of faith without which no one can ever obtain justification."

"Justification is not remission of sin merely, but also sanctification, and the renewal of the inner man." "Therefore when a man is justified and united to Jesus Christ, he receives together with remission of sins, the following gifts bestowed upon him at the same time, namely, faith, hope, and charity." "Then receiving in their regeneration true and Christian righteousness, as the best robe, white and spotless, bestowed on them through Christ Jesus, instead of that which Adam lost by his disobedience, both for himself and us, *they are commanded to preserve the same*, that they may present it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, and possess eternal life."

These passages contain the germ of that mystery of iniquity, which has penetrated the whole Romish system, fructifying into the Sacrament of Penance, the doctrine of Purgatory and Indulgences, of masses, and other satisfactions for the expiation of post-baptismal sin, and for the frequent restoration of the "perfect righteousness," and of the "spotless innocence" which were once bestowed in Baptism; but which, alas! are never retained by those who arrive at the age of accountability. Let us trace for a moment the progress of this unhappy growth.

If Baptism remits the party to the original state of Adam, then by a single sin he *forfeits that estate*, as Adam did; and his Baptism is no longer of any value or effect. He stands just where Adam did after his fall, and before

his reconciliation to God. This consequence is seen and provided for. Upon it is founded the next step in this doctrinal system. The learned Moehler, the most profound of the recent theologians of that communion, speaking of Post-baptismal sin, says, "Thereby is communion with God broken off, and the baptismal grace forfeited."—*Moehler's Symbolism*. p. 206.

If the Church had not happily declared the repetition of Baptism to be sacrilege, before this doctrine was invented, the Mormon device of baptism once a week or once a month, might have been resorted to in order to restore the forfeited life in Christ Jesus. But as this Sacrament could not be repeated, the ingenious expedient was adopted of getting up a new Sacrament, to be in the place of Baptism, and to perform precisely the office of Baptism. Moehler therefore continues: "Hence if the sinner wish to be converted from his evil ways, he needs a new reconciliation with God, and *therefore another Sacrament*; and such a Sacrament is Penance." The Divine Sacrament is thus deprived of all real value, even while its supposed effect is so falsely magnified. It imparts but once an imagined grace, which is sure to be lost, while the human Sacrament is represented as imparting the same grace, as often as it is needed. Thus the ordinary life of men is made to be a continued succession of deaths and births; of excision from the body of Christ, alternated with perfect holiness, righteousness, and purity. It is obvious that if a little discretion be observed in the administration of the supposed Sacrament of Penance, so as to repeat it in the article of death, and thus secure the new life and the perfect holiness which it confers, no man need fear the consequences of the sins and irregularities of his past life. And this acknowledged estimation of the value and effect of this rite does, in fact,

account for the anomalies in the character of a Roman Catholic population.

Here is another branch of this evil tree. The pseudo Sacrament of Penance makes men righteous. And "the righteous can satisfy the Divine law by their own works, and may truly merit the attainment of eternal life," says the council of Trent. And if these righteous persons choose to do works of supererogation, they may transfer this superfluity of merit to less industrious sinners. And so the "Catholic Manual" announces, "It is not less certain that the satisfactions of many saints were more than sufficient for their own sins, especially those of the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, who, although she never incurred the guilt of any sin, underwent the most exquisite afflictions and sufferings. Now the all good and just God could not allow those treasures of satisfactions to remain useless, which could be applied with great advantage to the other members of His Church. He therefore has given His Church the power of distributing to the faithful these spiritual gifts, according to their respective wants and merits; and this distribution is effected by INDULGENCES, which therefore can be granted by him only who has received from Christ the government, and the care of the Church, together with the power of binding and loosing the faithful."

The same authority goes on to say that the Pope has been very liberal in granting indulgences of late "that as sin abounds grace might much more abound." In point of fact, we know, that every order, and every society, in that extended communion, has one or more of these Indulgences, as a part of its capital stock, which its members can apply to their own use, or to the benefit of others, for the remission of the pains of purgatory. Thus the holiest and the

purest Christian acts, prayer and charity, are converted by this wretched corruption of religion into a base transaction of bargain and sale; so many prayers and so many good deeds being given for so much release of purgatorial torment.

But the notion upon which indulgences are founded—the conversion of repentance, good works, and Providential sufferings, into satisfactions for sin, is itself a subversion of the Gospel; of the work of God in redemption, and of the work of man as the redeemed child of God. It degrades the work of God in redemption: for it essays to add to the infinite satisfaction, which Christ has made for sin, the little and miserably inadequate works and sufferings of men. And God is made to stand towards His redeemed people not as a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, but as a rigid Creditor and Judge, weighing our merits, and exacting the last farthing of His due. To ascribe to any act or work of ours any power to satisfy the Divine Mind, as a commutation of the penalty of the broken law, is that very heathen abomination, which degraded the Majesty of the Eternal Father, and the sanctity of His perfect law. To talk of man's satisfying a broken law, by anything short of its penalty, is an abuse of words, and a mockery of God. When the Almighty Father looked upon our misery, and conceived the plan of our relief, He did not come to the lost creature whom He was about to save, for the vindication of His justice, and holiness, and truth. When the Mercy of God moved in our behalf, it moved with the power and infiniteness of its Divine Source. When Mercy triumphed, it triumphed wholly. Mercy found the ransom for guilty sinners. "This is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—1 Tim. i. 15. It was only in the infinite depths

of His own nature, that the Almighty could find the price of man's redemption, and the fitting vindication of His own holy law. And there he found it perfect, sufficient, complete, wanting nothing, and incapable of addition.

This same corruption of religion perverts the whole idea of the Christian life. It disposes of the sacrifice of Christ as merely the cause of a certain determination in the Divine Mind, by which the Eternal Father has consented to open an account current with His creatures, and to credit them with their penitence, their afflictions, their prayers, their works of mercy, as so much consideration paid, in part as a satisfaction for sins, and in part as the purchase of heaven. And the daily relation between God and man consists in the settling and adjustment of this account. This makes up the practical, every-day working of the system. And the great business of the Minister of Christ under it, is to act as the Factor between Almighty God and His guilty creatures; to settle the terms of this commerce in each particular instance; to receive the commutation and to pass the receipts.

How different from this complicated device of Priestly imposition is the Catholic doctrine, the teaching of the Bible and the Church. The Gospel of the Son of God proclaims that Christians are not enemies and rebels, who must pay the forfeiture of their crimes, but the ransomed of the Lord, the redeemed of the Holy One of Israel. The baptized members of the household of faith are no longer strangers and aliens, but children, adopted sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. And they are not called upon to settle now the terms of their acceptance, to drive a huckstering bargain for the pardon of sin, with their God and Saviour. For reconciliation for iniquity has already been made. All their sins have been blotted

out, all have been washed away in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. And now, all that they must suffer, and all that they must do; the varied dispensations of Providence, the pains of repentance, the exercises of charity, the consecration of the life to deeds of goodness and of mercy, are but parts of the healthful discipline, graciously appointed by a wise and indulgent Father to His children, to form and to mould their characters, to adapt them to their high relation, to qualify them for their station, to make them capable of that inheritance of everlasting glory to which they have been elected.

The maze of error which we have been contemplating, springs from that first departure from the truth, that seminal principle of error, which represents Baptism as the first beginning of the Divine Life—the first coming of the Holy Ghost, the Fountain of life, into the soul; and as the restoration of the baptized to perfect innocence, purity and uprightness.

If the first part of this proposition were true, men could not be brought to Baptism at all, except upon the Pelagian hypothesis, that man retains such “relics” of his original goodness, that he can love, believe, and obey the Divine law. But this hypothesis discharges the Holy Spirit from all necessary agency in man’s salvation, and was therefore by the whole Church rightly declared to be a deadly heresy. Leave out that hypothesis, and then, under this first branch of the Romish theory of Baptism, there could be no subjects for baptism at all, unless unbelieving and unrepentant sinners were dragged to the Sacrament; or brought, as the natives of East India actually were, by the Jesuit Missionaries, who surrounded them with soldiers and drove them to the Font.

CHAPTER XII.

PARALLEL BETWEEN BAPTISM AND CIRCUMCISION.

THE Covenant of Grace has been in operation ever since the first promise of a Redeemer. This covenant was made more specific in its form, and its character was beautifully illustrated by the call and mission of Abraham. The same covenant of grace attained its full and glorious completion in Christ the Saviour of the world. The peculiarity of the Abrahamic form of the covenant was the separation of that Patriarch and all his successors in the faith from the world, by a solemn religious consecration and mark of difference. The visible Church of God, which before had contained the whole of mankind, was now restricted to those who received this mark of election and adoption. And because this characteristic feature in the constitution of the Church has been continued ever since, and is made perpetual under the Christian dispensation, Abraham, in whom it was begun, is called, by way of eminence, the Father of the Faithful—of all believers who are thus visibly separated from the world.

The purposes for which the Levitical law and the national covenant with Abraham had been superinduced upon the earlier covenant of grace, were all completed by the sacrifice of Christ. From that moment the subjects of that law were absolved from its obligations, and the former

covenant of grace through faith, which had never been abrogated, remained, the common inheritance of Jew and Gentile. But the Jew of St. Paul's day, puffed up with spiritual pride, cast dishonor upon the God of his salvation, by rigidly restricting the grace of God to the subjects of the national covenant. According to him, Circumcision was not the sign and seal of God's favor, and the introduction to peculiar blessings and privileges, but it was the actual and exclusive bestowal of that favor of God which is life: and there was no favor, or love, or mercy for the uncircumcised. This narrow, contracted, and technical system, the Apostle strongly reprobates in the Epistle to the Romans and elsewhere. St. Paul does not tell us that one technical and disparaging view of God's mercy had been abrogated, in order to make way for just such another. But he contends that the Jewish gloss upon the Divine institution was always untrue. He vindicates against that gloss the fullness and freeness of the Divine goodness as witnessed in the rite of circumcision, and emphatically derives the Christian Church from the Abrahamic form of the covenant of grace, and demonstrates the fullness and freeness of the Christian dispensation, because of the fullness and freeness of the Abrahamic.

Now, therefore, adopting the method of the Apostle, in his argument with the Jews, if we ascertain clearly the relation which our father Abraham bore to the right of Circumcision, we shall at the same time have determined as clearly the relations which Christians bear to the Sacrament of Baptism.

1. Circumcision was the instituted way of initiation into a social body, elected to be the special people of God; and subsisting under the form, first, of the family, and then, of the nation. And it was to be indiscriminately applied to

all males who were capable of composing a part of a family or of a nation. Gen. xvii. 10—12.

So Baptism is the Sacrament of initiation—the actual adoption—into the family and kingdom of our Saviour Christ. “Go ye therefore into all the world, discipling all nations, baptizing them,” says the Divine commission. It is impossible for language to be more comprehensive than this. “Discipling”—every one who has capacity to learn, in “all nations:” that is, every human being born into the world, and as soon as it is born; for then the capacity for instruction exists, and then the duty of instruction begins. And all these, all capable of learning, in all nations, must be baptized; admitted, by solemn adoption, into the family of Christ; incorporated, by full naturalization into the kingdom of Christ.

2. The sanction under which these related institutions were proposed. See Gen. xvii. 14, for the sentence against those who despised circumcision: “That soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.” In accordance with this we read in St. Mark xvi. 16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

But why, in the economy of salvation, were such tremendous sanctions attached to the performance of external rites so unimportant in themselves as Circumcision and Baptism? Salvation is a system of grace and mercy, adapted by infinite wisdom to man’s nature and position. It is a part of the Divine plan, contrived by this infinite wisdom, that all believers should be organized into that social body which God calls His Church. The Church is an integral part of the revealed way of salvation. It is a perpetual body corporate, organized with reference both to the spiritual condition of each believer, and to the accomplishment of the purposes of God in regard to the publica-

tion and perpetuation of the truth. To adapt the economy of grace to man's nature, God requires the active labor and service of every man in the work of his own and of other's salvation. And He commands every one, to whom the Gospel is proposed, to come into His Church, and labor there in his appointed station, for the fulfilment of the merciful purpose of God towards himself, and towards the whole world. To refuse, or to neglect to do this, is to refuse or despise the mercy of God. It is to reject the salvation of the Gospel.

3. The Prototype of Baptism, Circumcision, is called a sign and a seal. It was a sign and seal of adoption into God's family,—of admission into His kingdom. Baptism is just such a sign and seal. And in regard to this effect, the Abrahamic and the Christian rite of initiation, produced the thing which they signified. This results from the nature of the institution and of the purpose to be effected by it. Just as a deed is at the same time the evidence of a grant, and the very grant itself, which passes the land, and invests the purchaser with the title. Therefore, we say, that Baptism effects that New Birth into the kingdom of Grace, which it witnesses, and of which it is the appointed sign.

But does Baptism actually thus accomplish all the other things of which it is the sign and the seal? Does it confer upon its recipient the favor of God, as well as certify that favor? Does it recreate the heart? Does it infuse love into the soul? Does it change a guilty sinner into a holy innocent? So says the mischievous theology of Rome. But we have seen that this was the very corruption and degradation of religion under the elder form of the covenant, as if its sacraments were charms and sorceries, which St. Paul was opposing.

Circumcision was, and Baptism is, the sign and seal of the favor of God. But neither bestowed that favor in the first instance, as is now strangely said. For Abraham had long been pre-eminently in the favor of God before the appointment of this seal. Cornelius had found favor with God before he received the Christian seal of that favor. Circumcision was, and Baptism is the sign and seal of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?" Rom. iv. 8—9. The Apostle here, by a pregnant inference, affirms that this was imputed to the uncircumcised. Therefore surely to the unbaptized as well. Circumcision was, and Baptism is, the sign and seal of the righteousness of faith: but neither bestowed that righteousness. For St. Paul expressly rules the contrary of the one: "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." Rom. iv. 11. And every Baptism of an adult person is a like demonstration in regard to the other. For there must be faith, formed and in exercise, as the condition of Baptism.

Thus we might go through the whole circle of Christian graces, and show that Baptism does not produce them, but witnesses the previous gift, and the continued promise, of that Holy Spirit from which they all proceed. It is the object of the Christian life, so to follow the guidance of that blessed Spirit, given unto us, that all our powers and affections, all our appetites and passions, may be conformed to the will of God; and our whole nature transformed into the likeness of the Son of God.

A distinction is sometimes attempted between the participation of Christ, which is said to be the peculiar effect and operation of Baptism; and the other graces of the

Spirit, which are admitted to have been given to God's ancient people, and to some unbaptized persons now. But this distinction will not stand when the test of Scripture is applied. For the Apostle tells us that all the members of the Church in the wilderness, good and bad, "did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and *that rock was CHRIST.*" 1 Cor. x. 3—4.

This parallel between the former and the later form of the covenant of grace leads us to the conclusion, so often reached before, that Christ is indeed the second Adam, the Head and Representative therefore, not of a few individuals, arbitrarily designated, either by a decree in heaven, or by a Sacrament on earth, but of the whole race of mankind: curing in that whole race, by supernatural gifts, the corruption of nature, so far as to place every man once more fairly in a state of freedom and probation. This is the great truth, the recognition of which as the basis of all Christian doctrine, will most effectually remove the stumbling blocks which human systems have cast in our way.

That adorable mystery, the Word made flesh, is the connection of all humanity with Christ, in a union, as close and as vital, as that which subsists between the same humanity and the first Adam. As in the latter all the myriads who have succeeded him were included, and from him are derived, so to the Second Adam the same ALL of human nature is conjoined by the power of the Holy Ghost. In Christ is included the whole family of man for justification, *in the same sense and to the same extent*, in and to which they were included in the first man to condemnation. It is impossible otherwise to understand that continuously presented analogy between the two which runs through the whole history of salvation, and which is summed up by

St. Paul in that profound and comprehensive summary of the mysteries of redemption, the 15th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians.

This derivation of the spiritual life of Christ to the whole race of mankind, restoring men to freedom, and leading them to good, shows us how Christ hath bought us with His own blood; and yet we are permitted to choose whose servants we will be. This explains how we are freely justified; and yet by faith we are saved. How when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; and yet we are continually entreated to be reconciled. How the Lord is our Righteousness; and yet without personal holiness no man can see the Lord. The resolution of all these apparent difficulties, which have so puzzled the makers of theological systems, is found in the fact that a glorious part of the work of Christ was performed for us, freely, without any agency, co-operation, or knowledge, upon our part. This is the work spoken of under various names as—the redemption—the atonement—reconciliation—justifying the ungodly—taking our nature into union with the Godhead—becoming the Lord our Righteousness. All this has been done for us, and without our agency.

But all this is not salvation, except in the case of those innocents, who, by the sole virtue of this redemption, are made holy by the inspiration of God's Spirit; and of whom it was therefore said by their Redeemer, the King of Righteousness, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." In every other instance, all this glorious work of the Saviour of men is not salvation, either to the few or the many. But it is the elevation of our common nature to the capacity of salvation; and the pledge of Almighty power to co-operate with every believer in making this salvation

sure. The sole work of Christ places every man in a state of trial, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost, puts him upon the vantage ground, in the contest for heaven and eternal life, against the forces of an evil nature, an evil world, and evil spirits.

This is the great central truth of Christianity, around which various systems of error have circled, each revolving in its own narrow orbit. Calvinism, Universalism, and Romanism, alike, and equally, deny that *every man*, through Christ, is in a state of probation, of trial, for heaven or for hell. The maintainers of these systems forget that the whole race of mankind has been living, ever since the fall, under the dispensation of GRACE. To the same common ancestor whose transgression brought upon his race the death and pollution of human nature, was the promise made of redemption through Christ. It is the grace given, the new life imparted through this Mediator—the second Adam—to co-exist with the old and corrupt nature which we derive from the first Adam, and to operate upon that nature to the utter extinction of its vileness and guiltiness, that constitutes the present condition of mankind a state of Probation, of Trial. Reprobation is the inevitable consequence when men reject the terms of salvation, and sin away their day of Grace.

CHAPTER XIII.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

HERETOFORE I have described the beginning of the way of salvation without using that important but much abused expression, Justification by Faith. This omission has been intentional; because the phrase has been so tortured and misapplied that the use of it is calculated to produce confusion, rather than clearness of conception, in the minds of those who are trying to escape from the mist and darkness of much of the popular theology of our day. But having stated now in other Scriptural language, what a man must first do to be saved, and distinguished that truth from some prevalent errors, my readers will be better prepared to appreciate the true meaning and force of this expression. It is important that the phrase should be understood; for it conveys a great truth, and is continually recurring in the Bible and in Christian theology.

Justification by faith only is often used by St. Paul in emphatic condemnation of that heathen corruption of religion which the Jews had imitated, and which was therefore almost universal. This corruption consisted in the conversion of the typical sacrifices, which foreshadowed the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," into a real propitiation and satisfaction for sin; and in attributing a meritorious efficacy, deserving of eternal life,

to those imperfect works of goodness which men are enabled, by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to perform. To this gross corruption the whole tenor of revealed religion is opposed. St. Paul argues against it with impassioned vehemence, and frequently declares, that Justification is the free gift of God to condemned and perishing sinners; and that it can be appropriated by faith only: that human satisfactions, and human merit, are ideas utterly incongruous with the actual relations between God and man.

But this corruption of religion springs from the deep-seated pride of the human heart, and is therefore constantly recurring. We have seen how prominent a place it occupies in the Romish system of Divinity. It pervades and characterizes every part of the new religion which, by that communion, has been built upon the old Christian foundation. The Reformers, therefore, were bound to protest most earnestly and vehemently against the prevalent and gross corruption of their own time. Thus the doctrine of Justification by faith only became the watch-word of the reformation, and the sharpest weapon of defence against the heathenish abominations of the new religion. This naturally led to the use of this expression in after times, by many persons, as a mere party phrase, with little understanding of its real meaning, or of the corruption of religion to which it was opposed. One thing that has contributed to keep these persons forever reasoning in a vicious circle, about the doctrine of justification, is the fact, that this word is employed in several distinct senses in the Bible. Without looking to the context to see in each instance of its use, what is the precise meaning intended to be conveyed, the right meaning in one place is arbitrarily fixed upon, and all the other passages of Scripture in which the word occurs must be tortured to bring out that same mean-

ing. Precisely the same process is applied to the other figurative terms of the Bible, leading in every case to like confusion and indefiniteness. As it is not probable that this abuse of Scriptural language will ever cease; and as different men will fix upon different meanings of Justification, as the exclusive one, variant theories of Justification may always be expected. It will help us to a clear understanding of this subject to consider these different meanings.

Justification, and its equivalent terms, are indifferently applied in the Bible to three distinct classes of persons.

1. They are used to express the great act of redemption, which was wrought for all humanity, and which entitles human nature to that gift of God—the Holy Spirit—from whose power alone every man derives a capacity for salvation. For, as the 10th Article says, no man can “turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God.” “We are bought with a price,” “justified freely by His grace,” describes the glorious work of Christ, performed freely for all mankind, without any knowledge or co-operation on their part. Man is bought, indeed, with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He is bought out of slavery, redeemed from the bondage of sin and death, into the liberty of the children of God. By this purchase only does man re-acquire the freedom to choose between good and evil, between life and death. To this effect are such expressions as the following: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” “The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be

saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Rom. v. 8, 9, 10.

In the last cited passage, the words "justified" and "reconciled" are used convertibly to express the universal atonement; and this atonement is urged to prove that Christ will continue to be sufficient for those who trust in Him. The 18th verse of the same chapter is still more direct. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *all men unto justification of life*." "God was in Christ, reconciling the *world* unto himself, not *imputing* their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. v. 19. And upon this foundation the Apostle beseeches the Corinthians "to receive not the grace of God in vain," saying, "Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2. Upon this same foundation must every minister of the Gospel base the like exhortations to men.

The effect here expressed, not only by the word Justification, but by other kindred forms of speech, may be called, for the sake of distinction, the first justification. With this, man has had and can have had, nothing to do. Faith here has no operation. It has been done for man, entirely without his assent or consciousness,—of the free mercy of God,—free and universal as the act of creation.

2. There is a frequent application in the Holy Scriptures of the term Justification to a second class of subjects. For as the Justification already spoken of bestowed on man the supernatural power to work together with his Maker for his own salvation, so the very first, and altogether indispensable exercise of that granted power, must be faith

in the reality and sufficiency of the provision made for salvation. This second justification is offered to men, upon condition that they accept it, and become parties to the covenant of grace of which it is an essential feature. Faith, therefore, not by any arbitrary appointment, but in the nature of things, is a necessary prerequisite in man, to enable him to become a party to this covenant. When we hear the glorious Gospel of the Son of God, and, with conscious mind, believe and trust in the way of life which it reveals, expressing our faith in the instituted Sacrament appointed for that purpose, then our formal adoption into the family of God, our admission, as His recognized children, to the unrestricted use of all the means of salvation, is called Justification.

This is Justification by faith only. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 1, 2. Here man begins to concur with God in the matter of salvation. Faith had no part in the first mentioned Justification. But here it is essential, and it is, in one sense, alone. It is the only grace that is here required, or that can be exercised, in the very act of appropriating the merits of Christ. Faith is here the hand put forth to take the mercy that God vouchsafes. All personal merit is here disowned and worthless. Our sins and our ruin alone brought a compassionate Saviour from the skies, to take upon Him our nature, that He might rescue it from pollution and sanctify it to God. A contrite sense of this our sin and utter ruin, is the only plea with which we can come before the Mercy Seat to receive the grace of pardon and adoption. The offer of any thing else—the tender of any righteousness of our own

would be vain, impertinent, and presumptuous. It is this Justification by faith only which stands in direct antagonism to the heathen and Romish corruption of religion, that presumed to bring human merits and human satisfactions into the relations between a merciful God and pardoned sinners.

In describing the instrumentality of faith, in justifying the ungodly, I have passed by that most trifling of modern disputes, which attempts to get up an opposition between Faith and its external expression in the Sacrament of faith. Baptism is the consummation, the completion of the act of faith. It is so appointed because man is composed of soul and body, and both must concur in all his actions to give them completeness and integrity. It has been seen that Justification is one of the terms of the covenant of grace. How must men become parties to that covenant? Almighty God has dealt with man, in this regard, according to his nature. In every covenant the interior consent of the mind of the parties is the principal thing. But in every covenant that which gives efficiency to the interior assent, is the external and appointed expression of it. So deceitful is the heart of man, so rapid, fleeting, and evanescent are the operations of his mind, that, until his purposes are made palpable, and reduced to some corporal form and expression, he himself cannot be sure of their nature and efficacy; and they are in fact inchoate and imperfect. So we determine, in regard to one another, in all the relations of life. So our Heavenly Father has determined for us, in regard to the various parts of the dispensation of grace. He requires the outward expression of the inward thought of the heart. Where, indeed, that outward expression cannot be made, the Just One will not require it. But where the opportunity of such expression is afforded He

does require it, and it is for our benefit that He should do so. He has so condescended to our nature and to our infirmity, as to enter into covenant with each separate person, by a special and particular outward act.

God has not deemed it sufficient to make a general proclamation once for all of His mind and will with regard to the salvation of the human race; but He has chosen and ordained a class of men to stand forever as His representatives, and upon His part, and in His name, to make, seal, and ratify, with each man, who will assent to the same, the precious covenant of grace and life in Jesus Christ. Shall man be too proud to meet his MAKER in the like form of covenant? Shall he requite the condescension of God by drawing himself up upon his dignity, and affirming that the interior assent of his mind is sufficient, and should be satisfactory to the Almighty?

This is the strange reasoning of some men. But is it not apparent that the outward and instituted mode of entering into covenant with God, by Baptism, never should have been separated from the Faith, of which it is the ordained and appointed expression? Baptism is not opposed to faith. It is the instituted expression, at once of God's pardoning mercy, and of the sinner's faith, humbly receiving that mercy. So it is treated every where in the Holy Bible. So it was regarded in the Holy Church throughout all the world, until a querulous disposition and a transcendental philosophy began to corrupt this part of Christianity, and to sever the things which God had bound together. St. Paul could not make this separation. He says, "For ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. iii. 25-6. Here Baptism and Faith are used as synonymous. They are

different parts of one whole, and the word which expresses either part is used for the whole. And in this short, emphatic passage, each word is employed convertibly to designate the whole effect expressed by both.

3. There is a third legitimate application of this word justification, and its equivalents, to yet another class of persons. It is to those who, having been justified by faith only, and received into God's family, go on to "lead the rest of their lives according to this beginning." Or, if by any invincible obstacle some have been debarred from the instituted expression of their faith in Baptism, they at least strive to concur with the members of the household of faith in all things possible to them. All who faithfully endeavor to conform their hearts and lives to the principles and rules of the Gospel, using diligently all accessible means of grace and growth, seeking continually for more and more of the Holy Spirit as the power of God unto salvation, gradually put on holiness. Mortifying all their evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living, they grow in grace, follow the example of their Saviour Christ, and are made like unto Him. When these faithful souls come to appear before the bar of God, they will be justified, because they have done the works of God; because they have improved the talent entrusted to them; because they have on the wedding garment of purity and love; because they are truly re-instated, by the operation of His Spirit, in the image of their Saviour, the perfect Man.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

DIVINE DECREES AND HUMAN FREEDOM.

The most profound mystery of natural religion is the apparent opposition between the omnipotence of God, determining all things, and the freedom of man. This is a mystery of our being, and it presents itself as strongly to the simplest as to the most cultivated minds. It is a difficulty which occurs in our earliest conceptions of human nature, and remains in all its force to the latest moment of our lives. The minds of children are always confounded by this mystery; for it is presented to them as vividly as to the philosopher. No solution of this problem is possible to our present faculties. It is a mystery; and it must remain so, until the powers of man are enlarged in a higher state of being.

But the mind of man is impatient of mystery. That spirit of inquiry, beneficently bestowed to enable man first to comprehend, and then to control, the hidden forces and capacities of nature, leaves its appropriate field of operation, and adventures here, upon that mystery of Divine and human concurrence, where knowledge is unattainable, and where all human perspicacity is at fault.

Some minds, morbidly intent upon this inscrutable mystery, and unwilling meekly to acquiesce in an ignorance which is inevitable; become shattered and crazed, in their earnest struggles to see light where God has not said that there should be light. Other minds, more superficial, but equally impatient of this Divine mystery, think that they have found a solution of it, and a final determination of the whole matter, when they make one of these truths override and destroy the other: when they make the Omnipotence of God, not to co-exist with, but to take the place of the freedom of man, by resolving all human actions into the decree of the Almighty. This is no solution of the mystery although intended to be so. It is simply the denial of the existence of any mystery. It is an entire leaving out of one of the terms of the problem. It is a subversion of a first truth of our being. Instead of a deep philosophy, as it calls itself, it is but a specimen of the facility with which men can be put off with a show of reason, in place of reason itself. This is the way in which whole nations, and many hard and seemingly profound philosophies, and systems of religious metaphysics, have disposed of this mystery.

This pretended solution of an insuperable problem has exercised the most pernicious influence upon vast multitudes of people in our own country. It is a difficulty which is presented with equal force to all minds. The easiest way of getting rid of it, is to acquiesce in that delusive determination, which makes it no difficulty at all, and at the same time takes away from human nature the *oppressive sense of responsibility*, by resolving all events into the predestination of the Most High. Many persons are actually presenting this vain speculation, as an excuse to themselves, for the neglect of the plainest and simplest duties of religion.

The common use which is made of this pernicious philosophy is a sort of half conscious resting upon one or both of these fancies. 1. That blind and undistinguishing trust in the mercy of God, which takes it for granted that He will not arbitrarily determine other than an easy and tolerable condition to the creatures He has made, and over whose destiny He exercises unlimited control. 2. That if God should intend our condemnation, we, at least, would be consoled by the thought that the result was one which we could not avoid. These fancies might be correct enough, if they were at all applicable to our case. Revealed religion shows that they have no sort of application to human condition or destiny.

THE GOSPEL DOES NOT ENTERTAIN, MUCH LESS DECIDE,
THIS PROBLEM OF NATURE.

The way in which revealed religion deals with this deep mystery, presents another beautiful instance of that analogy between the word and the works of God, which shows the identity of their origin. Nature offers no solution of the problem. But every man of sound mind is compelled, by his moral constitution, to lay the problem aside, and to act, in all the practical conduct of life, as if there were no such mystery. The most determined fatalist takes care of his own life, of his own health, of his own well-being in every respect, just as if he had never heard or dreamed of a Divine decree. The ordinary course of nature, and the constitution of the human mind absolutely require, that every man should ignore the imagined existence of any compulsory Divine influence over his actions. This is one revelation of God's will in regard to our practical entertainment of this mystery.

The Gospel is another revelation of the will of God in regard to the practical conduct of human life. Like the natural revelation, it says nothing about the mystery involved in the co-existence of Divine predestination and human freedom. It leaves that mystery untouched and unconsidered, and simply points every man to his duty, assuming for him a power to perform it. The whole Christian dispensation is founded upon the postulate of human freedom, just as the whole course of the world, in the Providential government of man, is founded upon the same postulate.

Christian religion assumes in every man a WILL, enslaved indeed by nature, but made free by the inspiration of the Most High, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and which may now therefore turn to good as well as to evil. It recognizes the natural impotence of man to keep the moral law. But revealed religion is a plan of intervention between the Divine law and our impotence. It is an elaborate system of *means*, skilfully and wonderfully adapted to our enfeebled and depraved condition; designed to remedy the evils, and to remove the corruption of that natural condition, and to restore man to the capacity of obeying perfectly, in the strength of Christ his Saviour, the law of life and happiness.

The most striking representation of this meaning of Divine revelation is conveyed to us in those numerous parables by which our Lord illustrated the nature of His kingdom of grace. They all announce and confirm the same great truth; but that truth is perhaps most clearly and emphatically expressed in the parable of the talents. The wicked and slothful servant in this parable probably represents the very class of persons who allege the Divine predestination as a reason why they should do nothing

in the work of their own salvation. These people say that they cannot fear, and love, and trust in God, as the Divine law requires, and therefore they think it will be unjust for God to condemn them for not doing those things which he gave them no power to do, and which had been already fixed by His predetermination. The parables referred to, very plainly expose the futility of this objection, by showing, that the things, in regard to which we allege a want of power, are not the things for which we shall be judged at all.

Christian religion is the revelation of Divinely efficacious means and instrumentalities for the removal of human infirmity, for the cure of human corruption, for the recovery of an apostate creature to the favor and likeness of his Creator. The means and instrumentalities, thus offered to us by revealed religion, are the talents bestowed upon every man, to whom this religion is proposed. When we come to give an account of ourselves to God, the question will not be, whether we have kept the whole law; but, how have we employed the talent absolutely given to us? How have we acted in regard to those things which were clearly within our power. There will be no place for controversy about Divine predestination, or human infirmity. For the only question will be, as to the employment of means, over which we have the same control as we have of our daily locomotion. We will not be asked whether we love God with all our hearts; but whether we have been accustomed to kneel down to pray to Him for his grace; whether we have obediently submitted ourselves to the teachings and strivings of God's Holy Spirit, which has so often urged us, to consider our ways, to repent us of our sins, and to come, through Jesus Christ the Saviour, to the throne of grace for pardon and acceptance.

The opportunity and the power, to do these things, are the talents for which we will be called upon to give an account. These talents have been given. They are certainly, by our own undoubted consciousness, as entirely under our unlimited control, as are the movements of the hand and arm. To go to Church is as much within our power as to stay at home, or to walk about the streets. To kneel down, and pray to God in His house, is as certainly within our control, as, indolently, and irreverently, to retain our seats during the time of prayer. It is, clearly, by a determination of our own will, whether, at lying down to rest, or rising up to labor, we will recognize our consciousness of a God, and humbly commit ourselves to Him, or whether we will be as the Atheist, who knows no God. These are the things, in regard to which we will be questioned; and it will be vain and impertinent, upon such an arraignment, to allege our opinions about the Divine decrees, or to complain of the imagined hardship of the Divine government. The slothful servant in the parable tried this evasion: but out of his own mouth his Lord condemned him. He was only inquired of as to the talent that had been given to him. In his very plea he confessed to the fullness of his power over that talent. He had hid the talent in the earth of his own will, contrary to the interest and intention of his Lord. The same will, rightly exercised, would have put out that money to the usurers, for the benefit of his Master. So, our refusal to use the means of grace, is itself evidence enough that we had the power to use them.

The Universe is composed of minute and insignificant atoms. The mightiest results are made dependent upon the concurrence of the most trifling causes. So it is in nature. And so in Grace. The Saviour of the world has

opened for man a way of access to heaven, to happiness, and to God, which consists of successive steps on our part, each of them minute, and of little seeming consequence. Each of these steps, in its order, is placed entirely, and beyond all question, within our own power, and subject to our free and unrestrained action. The power to take the first, and any successive one of these steps, is the talent given to us. No person in the world ever entertained a doubt about his absolute control over the doing or the leaving undone these little things. The consciousness of every man has assured him of his unqualified freedom in these particulars, with a certainty which all the reasonings in the world cannot confuse. Instead of employing the talent certainly committed to us, we fix our attention upon the great results of the Christian life—love, holiness, purity—and say that we cannot accomplish these great things, that God has predetermined these mighty results. But the Judge before whom we are to appear will not institute the slightest inquiry about those things in relation to which we ever alleged a want of power to compass them. The only account demanded of us is, in regard to our performance, or neglect, of those little and easy duties, which were certainly within our power. The talent given to us, our use or abuse of that, alone will be inquired of. God's destined purpose, in appointing the varied means of grace, will not be required of us at all. That is His own work, and He will see to its accomplishment. The result of the means we are commanded to employ is indeed beyond our control, and therefore we will not be inquired of at all in relation to it. Where we have no power there will be no accountability. But an account must be rendered of those things over which our power is known, by ourselves, to be supreme. We must give account of our use or neglect of

those means and instruments of grace which are placed as entirely within our control, as are the means and instruments of our daily calling.

This does not authorize a merely formal and perfunctory employment of the means of grace, resting in them as an end. Although we cannot command the result of those means, which is God's own work, yet to use them, without reference to that result, is no faithful use of them at all. As moral beings we must work together with God in the whole business of salvation. And God works effectually in us, only when we use the means of grace, with a constant and earnest looking to, and striving after, the end which they are designed to accomplish—the sanctification of the soul.

JEWISH DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

There was, in our Lord's day, a Jewish doctrine of election, very different from the metaphysical dogma we have been examining, and just as far from the truth. This maintained the absolute and unconditional election of the Jews to eternal life, as the peculiar and favorite people of God—the circumcised members of His Church. Many of the parables of our Saviour are directed against this doctrine of election.

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

But there is a true doctrine of election, of which the Scriptures make frequent mention. There is an election, in the economy of grace, corresponding with that in the

economy of Providence. Here again the two kingdoms of nature and of grace are alike, because they proceed from the same infinite Fountain of goodness and truth. This true election, in either kingdom, is, to privileges, to honor, to dignity, to station, and to responsibility commensurate with the gifts and advantages bestowed.

By the dispensation of Providence one man is elected to encounter the trials and temptations of wealth; another to the harder estate, but not to the sorer trials and temptations, of poverty. The election of one man puts upon him the obligation to make a right use of a large fortune; keeping and disbursing it in the fear and to the honor of God. The abuse of this trust causes rich men to be proud, sensual, vain, selfish and atheistic. The poor man, who must struggle through life for the means of living, is disciplined to hardness, and to a certain strength of character, apart from his own exertions. The abuse of his position is apt to produce envy, discontent, dishonesty, grovelling thoughts, feelings, and practices. Which of these two classes of evil affections produce the greatest degree of unhappiness, it would be hard to say. Thus, in the necessary inequalities of the social scale, there are, as the Scripture phrases it, vessels to honor and to dishonor. The election of Providence determines to a large extent the position which each one is to occupy: but each place and each station has its own duties, its own responsibilities, and its own rewards.

So precisely in the Kingdom of Grace. The election here, for which God has given to His creatures no account, and no reason, determines whether we shall be born in a Christian land, of Christian parents, and placed by Baptism in the fold of Christ. But there is no such irresponsible election to eternal life. The spirit and the letter of

Divine revelation assure us that eternal life is dependent upon the use which men make of the means of salvation accorded to them. The election is, to the possession and enjoyment of more or less of the instituted means of salvation. It is an election to privileges, to honor, and to responsibility. And that which ultimately equalizes this distribution of the Divine favor, and vindicates His government as without partiality, is the principle, that unto whom much is given of him only will much be required ; that the possessor of five talents must render a just account of each one of the five and of its increase ; while the man with one talent will only be held accountable for that one and its reasonable increase. Many of the parables, as we have seen, illustrate the principle, that the use which men make of the privileges to which they are elected, and not the extent or value of those privileges, will be the measure of their reward.

The Jewish doctrine of election has been reproduced in the Christian Church, and may always be expected, because it springs from one of the most powerful tendencies of the natural heart. This is the tendency to seize upon externals, rest in them, and worship them. It displays itself universally. The rich man fastens his affections upon his wealth, regards it as an end—the great end of human life—and not merely as the means of doing good. He looks upon himself, not as the steward and trustee of this wealth, but as its sovereign owner, unaccountable to any power in heaven or in earth for its employment. And he very often magnifies himself, and worships himself as a God, by reason of his uncontrolled possession of this instrument of power.

So again in the kingdom of Grace. Men look upon their privileges, their election to honor and responsibility, as an

end, rest in that supposed end, and magnify themselves for these privileges, forgetful of the only purpose of them. This is in truth to destroy the whole character and value of the means of Grace. Their character and value consist in the fact that they are *means*, instruments, of Grace. They are the agencies by which God's Holy Spirit works in us and with us, to recreate us in the Divine image. To divorce this purpose, this end of these appointments, from the means of Grace, resting in them as an end, is to annul their virtue and efficacy.

Christian people are "elect through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 St. Peter i. 2. Their election is "unto obedience," and that application to their souls of the blood of Christ, by which God has been reconciled to them, vouchsafed to them the pardon of all their sins, and adopted them into His family as His dear children. This election "unto obedience" places its subject in a condition to heed the exhortation of the Apostle: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. ii. 12—13.

God works in us, but He works in us as intelligent creatures, who must work together with Him, for the accomplishment of the same glorious end. / That end is to make us "new creatures in Christ Jesus," by "mortifying and killing all vices in us," by subduing every unholy affection, and reinstating us in the image of Christ our Saviour. To leave out of view this end of Christian life, not to reach continually forward towards the attainment of that end, to be satisfied with a mere perfunctory performance of the routine of external religious acts, is to degrade religion to a sort of mechanism, and fatally deceive the souls of all

who are guilty of this desecration. This resting in the form of Godliness, while regardless of its power, is a most obstinate as well as a general disease. It is hard to remove, because it is so congenial to the heart of man. It satisfies the mere religious instinct, and puts a quietus upon the conscience, while it leaves the passions to seek their gratification in unrestrained indulgence.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.

THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS, AND THE NURTURE CONSEQUENT THEREON.

THE subject last considered forms an appropriate introduction to that view of Christian progress which must now be presented. In Baptism, every child is taught to say, that he "was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." They were made members of Christ, because they were, by Baptism, incorporated into "the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Ephes. i. 22—3. The members of Christ are necessarily, by virtue of that relation, the children of God; "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Rom. viii. 17.

I shall not attempt a formal refutation of that pernicious and destructive heresy, which denies the seal of God's covenant of love and mercy to the most precious subjects of that covenant—the dear children for whom Christ died. The word heresy is advisedly applied to this corruption of religion, because it directly contradicts and annuls, in regard to more than one-half of the subjects of redemption, that article of the Christian Creed which teaches us to "believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins."

It is true that God, of His infinite goodness, does not tie His mercy to his sacraments; and so, the children of His love, dying in infancy, are saved by the blood of Christ, notwithstanding the folly of those natural guardians who withheld from them the blessed sign and seal of this saving mercy. But God does tie us to His appointments; and thus to set aside the most solemn of those appointments can only be excused upon the ground of unintentional ignorance. The plea that the child may be saved without Baptism is but a limited application of the Quaker argument, which puts away the Sacraments entirely, and of the Infidel argument, which dispenses with the whole Christian revelation. God by His Spirit can cleanse the soul, says the Quaker, without these external agencies. God can be merciful, says the Infidel, without the instrumentality of a Christ, or of a revealed religion.

If God has appointed "one baptism for the remission of sins," original and actual, Christians have no alternative but to apply that Sacrament to all the subjects of redemption, who are capable of it. Now, as we have seen, Baptism is the seal of the forgiveness of sins, and the actual adoption of the baptized into the family of God. Children are not only capable of receiving these benefits, but they are the best and fittest subjects of them. They are *capable* of receiving the inestimable benefit of adoption or new birth into God's family, just as they were capable of birth into an earthly family; because the common object of the first and of the second birth is, that the children may receive that tender nurture which is necessary to their well being. And young children are the *fittest* subjects of the new birth, because the nurture thereby secured to them will be much more effectual to its destined purpose, the formation of a Christ-like character, than the same nurture

applied to the adult subject, whose habits and affections are fixed in enmity to God and goodness.

To refuse the Sacrament of adoption to the children of God and the fellow-heirs with Christ; to withhold the seal of the covenant of grace from the recipients of grace; to deny the outward token of reconciliation with God to those who are partakers of the nature of Christ; to shut out from the kingdom, as strangers, aliens, and enemies, those who were appointed to be fellow-citizens with the saints; to exclude from the family and household of God, and from the holy nurture and the succours of heavenly grace there provided, the youngest and feeblest members of the family; to fence off from the fold of Christ the lambs of His flock, is a subversion of the Gospel plan of salvation at its foundation: is a virtual surrender, as far as one false principle can go, of the most impressible and helpless portion of Christ's redeemed, to the dominion of sin, and to the power of the Devil. St. Paul tells (1st Cor. x. 2) that all the Israelites were baptized in the cloud and in the sea; but according to this theology, the children should have been left on the other side, to become the unresisting prey of Pharaoh and his hosts.

The Church which has preserved and transmitted to us the Holy Bible, the Sacraments of Christ's institution, the Ministry of His appointment, and the Faith "once delivered to the saints," has always joyfully complied with the command of her Lord to "suffer the little children to come unto ME, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Gladly she receives them, and earnestly she exhorts the God-fathers and God-mothers of these heirs of salvation, diligently and faithfully to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She puts upon these guardians the charge, so to inform and cultivate the mind,

and so to guide and chasten the affections of Christ's loved ones, that, at the appointed age of discretion, they may be brought, with a glad and willing mind, "to the Bishop, to be confirmed by him." The effect of a true Christian culture will be, to induce the children to offer themselves a living sacrifice to God, renewing in their own persons their vows of allegiance of fidelity, and receiving anew, with new succours of heavenly grace, the assurance of the forgiveness of all their sins, and of God's fatherly love and goodness towards them.

Christian nurture is always at first successful. I have never known the child who had been taught the elements of Christian knowledge, who was not religious,—who did not show a tender susceptibility to the influences of religion. But religion is a life. And the unfailing law of all life is progress or decay. There is no such thing as a stationary point in the natural or in the spiritual life. Those who do not go forward will inevitably go backward. Growth or decline are the only alternatives.

CONFIRMATION.

The Apostolic rite of Confirmation tells the Church's estimate of the necessity of progress in personal religion. It is appointed for all who, having been born again in Holy Baptism, of water and of the Spirit, have arrived at the age of discretion, and have been growing hitherto. It thus marks distinctly a stage in the heavenly progress of the soul. It tells of the new dangers and of the increased responsibilities of the heir of salvation, in the new career, which a new period of life ushers in. It teaches, therefore, the necessity for higher and further helps and assistances

of the Holy Spirit, for this new position. And it provides those succours of Divine Grace for the pressing exigency of the occasion. It warns most faithfully against the danger of ceasing to go forward, or of thinking to stand still. The folly and impossibility of this position are involved in the very issue now presented by the Church to her children. For, when the question is thus distinctly put to each one, Will you engage now to serve your God, or will you turn from that service? Will you acknowledge your Creator and Redeemer, or reject Him?—the negative answer to these inquiries exposes at once the backward and downward course which the soul is taking. The refusal to go forward is a deliberate self-devotion to go down, on that facile and slippery descent, which stops for a time at simple irreligion, and terminates at last in apostacy and reprobation.

The Church thus presents to her younger members a blessed opportunity, at this crisis of the religious life, to try themselves, to see what manner of spirit they are of, to ascertain what progress they have made, and if they find themselves careless and indifferent about this holy rite, and their soul's condition; or if their hearts are averse to it, and to its solemn vows; then they have reason to be greatly alarmed at their state. Their only safety is to be thus faithfully warned of their danger, and to fly from their impending doom, to the refuge set before them in the Gospel. Their dreadful fate, if being warned, they will not turn, is no contingency. Their punishment is involved in their crime. If they will not go forward to heaven, they are assuredly going backward to perdition. Progress is the law of the religious life. That law must be obeyed, or its penalty is sure.

Confirmation, or "the laying on of hands," is ranked by St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, along with Bap-

tism and Repentance, as one of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the *foundation* of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Heb. vi. 1, 2. The confirmation by the Apostles of those who had been previously baptized is frequently mentioned in the brief evangelic record of their acts. While the power of baptizing was committed to inferior Ministers, the Apostles reserved this solemn office to themselves; thus connecting all the Christian people immediately with the chief earthly Ministers of Christ. The Church has followed this inspired example, by restraining the power to administer this rite to the Bishops, the direct successors of the Apostles in their pastoral office.

If God has graciously deigned to make this and other provisions for our salvation—thus wisely adapting the plan of salvation to the nature of its subjects—shall we insultingly say, "It is unnecessary, we will obtain this salvation in some better way?" The Holy Spirit, given unto us, and given according to the established provisions of the economy of grace, is the sole efficient Agent of salvation. This has been true under every dispensation. And so the Prophet Zechariah announces, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Zech. iv. 6. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." And "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," says St. Paul. 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7. God and man, co-workers in the great business of salvation, characterizes the whole mediatorial scheme. The whole work of Christ was performed by the union of God and man. The entire work of human renovation is performed by the union

of God and man. God, the Holy Ghost, the efficient power in the soul; not taking the place of human nature, but making that nature free, free as a child of God, free as the servant of truth, and aspiring to that perfection and happiness which God will bestow upon His faithful children. To accomplish this glorious result, man must work together with God. Man can do nothing here by himself. God will do nothing, beyond the first gift of spiritual life, without the consent and the co-operation of man. For the freedom to be attained is moral freedom, the victory to be achieved is a moral conquest, the work to be done is the conversion of the will and of the affections to God. God gives by His Spirit the power to resist evil, to withstand temptation, to choose and maintain the right, to love and follow after goodness, to be the free, cheerful, happy doers of His will. But men must exercise this granted power. They are free now by the inspiration of the Spirit. God does not drag His people to heaven in chains. Christ leads them there as the Captain of their salvation, as His brethren in arms. Whenever, therefore, men cease to perform their part in this work, when they refuse to be led by the Spirit of God into all holy obedience, when they neglect to resort to the instituted channels of grace, when they no longer strive against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, then the work of salvation is at once arrested, growth ceases, and decay begins. The corruption that remains in the regenerate is the power of an endless death, until it is entirely removed, until the soul is purified from the last dregs of this infection. It is this fearful truth, and the natural indolence of the soul in all its conflicts with sin—the fatal tendency to rest satisfied with present attainments—which makes it absolutely necessary to be pressing continually forward, and which induced the Apostle to rouse

the Christians of Ephesus by the stirring exhortation, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Ephes. v. 14. The disease of the soul is not superinduced upon previous health, but it is congenital—born with us—and infecting every power, and faculty, and feeling. This world and this life are the time and opportunity of extirpating that disease. Jesus Christ is the great Physician who alone can cure. Whenever we cease to call upon Him for aid, and to use the prescriptions by which He works our cure, the ravages of the disease are resumed, and will terminate in the death that never dies.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL TO ADULT PERSONS WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

PRACTICAL EVILS OF THE THEORY WHICH REFERS THE BEGINNING OF SPIRITUAL LIFE TO THE PERIOD OF CONVERSION.

IN the foregoing sketch of Christian progress from the Baptism of the infant to the Confirmation of the intelligent believer—the young, but well trained soldier of the cross—we have presented the ordinary plan of salvation, according to the design of its Author. But that Divine plan is thwarted and defeated at innumerable points by its wilful subjects.

That theory of religion, which refers the beginning of spiritual life to the Conversion of the adult believer, has operated with most pernicious influence upon the popular mind. Intimately and legitimately connected with this theory is the denial of Baptism to the larger part of the redeemed children of God—the infant portion of the race. Many of those who have adopted this mischievous theory of the religious life, inconsistently retain the Sacrament of Baptism, according to the institution of Christ; administering it to all the heirs of salvation. But to baptize any person, infant or adult, who is destitute of spiritual life,

who is not connected with Christ, the Source of life, is a mere form, and consequently a solemn mockery.

The persons who thus inconsistently administer baptism to infants, are induced by their theory so to disparage and undervalue the sacrament, as to deprive it of all its moral power and influence upon the life. Baptism passes for nothing at all—a mere ceremony—and the error is deeply fixed in the public mind, that the spiritual and religious life is yet to be begun, and completed too, by a great change in the feelings and convictions of the soul, *at some appreciable moment*, after the period of childhood has passed.

I have stated the fact, so irreconcilable with this malign theology, that young children, who receive any fair degree of religious instruction, are always religious. But this state does not last long under the ordinary culture of the society in which we live. The social feeling which denies a Christian character and Christian nurture to children, quickly destroys this healthful state. The law of progress and its penalty operate with tremendous power here. The child who does not go forward in the Christian life, goes backward, until all religious sensibility is lost, and we behold the precocious unbeliever, cold, callous, sneering, blaspheming. Evil example and evil companions have wrought this ruin. It is horrible to think of, but too true, that, sometimes, one or both of the parents, by their own irreligious lives, have led their children away from God into this loathsome pit of darkness and death. The very power of filial reverence and love is used by parents to the destruction of their children. Thus the tradition of ungodliness descends, with increasing force and volume from generation to generation, until now a boy or young man,

properly educated, must possess an unusual force of will, and heroic constancy, to be able to resist the current.

In consequence of this unhappy condition of things, the ordinary economy of the kingdom of grace is no longer applicable to the salvation of the great mass of the community. That ordinary economy is set forth in the Divine injunction, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6. And in that Divine commendation of the Father of the faithful—"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Gen. xviii. 19.

In direct contradiction to this ordinary economy of salvation, children are taught by the generally received theory, that they have nothing to do as yet with religion—that they are strangers and aliens from the household of God, and can do nothing good or acceptable unto Him, until they pass through some mysterious change and transformation of character, variously styled, regeneration, the new birth, conversion, and justification. In the mean time, until this mighty change comes, the natural corruption of the heart, and the overwhelming current of ungodliness in social life, concur to stimulate the deluded children of the promise, to serve the world, the flesh, and the Devil, with all their heart, with all their mind, and with all their strength.

Thus the forming period of life, the time when character is most surely developed, and most firmly fixed, when the disposition is determined, and when the affections receive their permanent impress and direction, is taken away from God, and devoted to impiety. Can we wonder at the difficulty of persuading men, after this, to become Christians.

The work of changing a corrupt nature into a holy nature is hard enough when performed at every advantage, when all the precious means of grace are employed from the dawn of existence unintermittedly to the end of life. But when that corrupt nature has been cultivated, and hardened into fixed habits; when the affections have been taught to flow, in deeply worn channels, at enmity with the truth; when the Gospel must change the long established current and purpose of the soul; the difficulty of its successful operation is almost infinitely increased. And so the strong, unbroken, and fast flowing stream of ungodliness that is rushing over the land plainly testifies. Not many of the vast multitude become nominal Christians, in mature life. Not so many become real Christians then in heart and life.

REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND CONVERSION, AS APPLIED TO THIS CLASS OF THE SUBJECTS OF REDEMPTION.

The Gospel of Salvation has made provision for this, and for all other exigencies of human position, produced by human wilfulness and wrong. The Church must not cease sternly to rebuke the doctrinal error out of which so much of this evil has proceeded. But she must also faithfully apply to this wound of humanity the healing balm which the great Physician has placed in her keeping. Repentance and Conversion are the first and the indispensable remedies for this inveterate sickness of the soul. Or, as the same thing is convertibly expressed by St. Paul, when he described his own full publication of the Gospel, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xx. 21.

Let it not be understood that these health-giving medicaments of the Gospel are applicable only to the condition which we are now considering. They belong to the whole Christian life in all its states and varieties. Faith, informed by the Holy Spirit, is the continuing power and the ever present guide of the Christian life. Repentance is the chastening discipline by which at all times corrupt nature is to be purified, and brought to healthfulness. Conversion is that gradual and ceaseless change of the renewed soul, by which all the powers and affections of man are transformed into the image of Christ. And this is the appointed work of the whole life of man in this world, of the whole allotted period of probation.

But these words, and especially the term conversion, have a more precise and emphatic application to those persons who have surrendered themselves to the dominion of sin, and have been living without God in the world, when they would turn and be saved. They must be CONVERTED, as some of the Jews were, who had crucified their Lord and Master; as St. Peter was, who had denied Him; as St. Paul was, who had persecuted Him; as the Prodigal Son was, who had left his father's house, and wasted his substance with riotous living. That is to say, these sinners must see the error of their way, and turn from it, confessing and bewailing their sins, and seeking earnestly of God pardon and forgiveness, through the blood of Christ. They have been walking hitherto in one direction, and in one path—downward to eternal ruin. To be saved, they must reverse their steps, they must leave that path, they must find the way of life which Christ has marked with His own footsteps, and resolutely walk therein, upward to God. This change of direction and of pathway is Conversion, in the sense of that term as applied to this class of

persons. Again, these persons have been long estranged from God, they have been living in utter disregard of Him and of His laws. They have been serving with all their might the enemies of God and man. To be convinced of the wickedness, danger and folly of this course, to renounce with all the heart this fatal subjection, to turn with the whole soul unto God, for pardon and reconciliation, this is Conversion.

POPULAR FALLACY IN REGARD TO CONVERSION.

But even here, the popular theology has made an issue with the Bible, and with the ordinary consciousness of men, which puts a new obstacle in the way of the sinner's return to God. The theory which makes Conversion to be the beginning and almost the consummation of spiritual life ; the first access of the Holy Ghost to the soul, changing at once all its perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and desires ; so magnifies this change, speaks of it in such mystical and exalted strains, and so leaves out of view all its necessary antecedents, that plain men, who cannot be controlled by the imagination, and are not easily brought under the mesmeric influences of a revival meeting, are unable to recognize any thing of the sort in their own experience. They therefore conclude that they have not yet been effectually called of God to His service. With some little tinge of incredulity, perhaps, they rely upon the faithfulness and sufficiency of their guides, and easily accept an agreeable delusion, which enables them to enjoy the pleasures of sin, while they throw upon their Maker the responsibility of their own delay, and the whole care of their conversion.

This popular offspring of modern sectarianism, by substituting certain vague, indefinable, and fantastic notions and sentiments, for the simple faith, and the humble obedience of the Gospel; insisting upon the former as the only tests of true religion, and depreciating the latter as worthless and deceptive; has confounded the minds of many honest and intelligent persons. Deluded by the oft repeated phrases of this indefinite system, these persons have come to look upon practical Christianity as an unreality, with which they can have nothing to do, until God shall please to perform in them a new miracle, and to make to their souls a new revelation. It is obvious that such a system is admirably fitted to encourage self-deception in the sickly and imaginative, and to serve as a cover for the hypocrisy of the vicious, while it discourages and repels the honest, the intelligent, and the plain dealing.

THE BIBLE REPRESENTATION OF THIS GRACE.

In contrast with this whole system of errors and ambiguities, the Bible and the Church, as has been largely proved, assure us, that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," that "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," that spiritual life has been imparted in Christ Jesus to every soul of man, to co-exist with the carnal life, as the only means of trial and the only ground of the judgment of men.* The probation of every man therefore consists in the choice of the emancipated will to be in subjection to the flesh, or to the Spirit, to be led by the one or by the other. The Bible and the Church therefore speak to all men alike, telling them, not to wait for the Spirit yet to be given, but to hear and obey the Spirit that is already

* 1 Cor. 12-13. 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.

in them, sealing and confirming upon the heart the external truth which the messengers of God proclaim. The Bible and the Church say to all men that the Spirit of God has been poured upon all flesh, Acts ii. 17. That God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of all the redeemed. Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6. And they exhort all men to grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Ephes. iv. 30. To quench not the Spirit. 1 Thess. v. 19. To stand fast in one Spirit. Phil. i. 27. To be filled with the Spirit. Ephes. v. 18. To "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other : so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Gal. v. 16—18. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. vi. 8.

When Christ calls us to come unto Him, by the external word, and by the external ministry, He has already given to us grace sufficient to enable us to obey the call, and truly to come to Him, in soul and in body. For Christ calls the whole man, and demands the allegiance and the service of soul and body alike to Himself. The soul must come by the action of the enlightened will, fleeing for refuge from the vengeance of insulted mercy, "to lay hold upon the hope set before us" in the Gospel. And this determination of the will must be made effectual and complete by bringing the body to enter visibly into the covenant of grace ; or to return to obedience to that covenant ; by confessing Christ before men, by a diligent use of all the appointed means of Grace, by taking our allotted station, and performing our whole duty in the ranks of Christ's

militant Church, by laboring faithfully in the vineyard of the Lord; "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. x. 10.

Those who refuse to obey the call of Christ, do it freely, to their own wrong. They choose their own state, and, consequently, affix the sentence of condemnation upon themselves. There is no mysticism, and no mystery about this part of Christianity at all. It is a plain question of choice between one service and another; between the carnal and the Divine life; between sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit; between being led captive by the lusts of the flesh, or being led by the Spirit into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The Spirit of God within them, the Divine life of the soul which they have been trying to extinguish by sin, gives to every man the same power to make the better choice, which the old carnal nature gives to make the worse. The will, by the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, is free, perfectly free, to make the one choice or the other; except in so far as it has been brought again into bondage by indulgence in sin, by men's own previous voluntary submission to the dominion of sin.

This additional enslavement of the will, and consequent diminution of its power to turn to good, is a part of the penalty which every man is accumulating upon himself every day that he continues to be the servant of sin. But until he becomes reprobate, until he is utterly abandoned of God; as long as the Holy Spirit stays with him, giving him any inclination to good, and love of good; the possibility of freedom, the capacity to turn to God, and to do works meet for repentance, remains. A harder struggle, and a stronger effort will be required, in proportion to the time during which men have submitted themselves to the

power of evil; but when the awakened soul feels the faintest desire to be free, and will manfully resolve no longer to earn the "wages of sin," but anxiously to seek for "the gift of God," the Spirit of the Most High will be found sufficient for the exigency, and the mighty power of God unto his salvation, if the sinner will be faithful to himself.

A POPULAR OBJECTION TO SUBMITTING TO THE TERMS OF THE GOSPEL.

It is an entire departure from the terms of the choice freely offered to us between good and evil, between the service of God and the service of the Devil, to allege, as is often done, that we cannot fulfil the whole law, that we do not love God with all our heart, or our neighbor as ourselves, or hate all sin with a perfect hatred, and therefore to conclude that we have no right to come to Christ for salvation, to enter into His vineyard, or to enlist in His army.

This is a mistake which produces an infinite deal of mischief. The law is not a part of the covenant of grace, but the end of that covenant. If men could perfectly obey the law of life and happiness there would be no necessity or place for Christianity. But because the law of life is to us sinners a law of condemnation and death, Christ came to fulfil the law for us. Now then, says St. Paul, we "are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Gal. iii. 24. And the same law remains a schoolmaster, the standard of Christian attainment, the unrepealable condition of eternal life and happiness, to keep us near to Christ, abiding in

Him, trusting not in ourselves but in Him, seeking for more and more of His Spirit, laboring in His strength, "growing up into Him in all things," going from grace to grace, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Gal. iv. 13. Then, when we have attained this fullness of the stature of Christ, we shall be enabled like Him to obey perfectly the law of life and happiness. Whether this consummation of grace is reserved for the reward of the faithful soldier of the Cross in the article of death, or when it is given, we are not informed. Certain it is that St. Paul had not reached to this summit when he wrote the Epistle to the Philippians; for he says there, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 12, 13.

To allege then our inability to keep the whole law, or any part of it, as a reason for declining to accept the terms of the Christian covenant, or to come to Christ for salvation, is a flat contradiction of the very sense and meaning of the Gospel. Christ came to call, not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. If men could keep the law they would not need Christ, but because they cannot keep it, they must come to Him for salvation, and be found in Him, or perish in their sins.

What is really wanted to bring the sinner to Christ, is a sufficient and proper sense of sin, of our own guiltiness

before God, of our inability to walk in the law of the Lord, and a sincere desire to escape from the power and the condemnation of sin, joined with so much knowledge of the Gospel as enables us to believe and trust in Christ as the Saviour from this power and condemnation of sin. That sense of unworthiness which men sometimes offer as an excuse for staying away from Christ, so far from being a valid apology, is, if deep and real, the very condition, and the indispensable condition, of their coming to Him acceptably. A true conviction of sin is the passport of the sinner to Christ. This, with trust in Christ as the Saviour of sinners, and a full determination to accept the salvation of the Gospel upon the terms of the Gospel, is all the qualification that can ever be attained for entering fully and unreservedly into the Gospel covenant.

If these feelings have been awakened in the soul in a faint degree, like the grain of mustard seed to which our Saviour likens the kingdom of heaven, they are the witnesses there of God's Spirit, striving with us. They are the remaining manifestations of that spiritual life which Jesus gives to all His redeemed, in order that by the sympathetic power of that hidden life He may draw them all to Himself, and conform them all to His perfect nature. Do not rudely stifle or banish these precious feelings, these blessed manifestations of the Divine life in your souls. But cherish them, nurture them, follow their guidance, go with them to Christ, from whom they came, and they will prove to be the power of an endless life with God. For, however faint and feeble they may be now, their existence proves their vital power. It is the essential quality of all life to grow under proper culture. The physical and the spiritual kingdoms are identical in this. The feeblest beginnings are slowly developed into the mightiest results. The flower

and the fruit are in the little, dried seed. But the flower and the fruit will never be produced unless the seed be placed in the earth, where it will be kindly nurtured by the dew and the rain, and the sunshine of heaven, and be allowed gradually and silently to expand and grow.

So of the Divine life in the soul of man. God gives just enough grace to bring every poor sinner to Christ for more grace. To demand that God shall give this additional grace, before we use the grace already given by coming to Christ for all we need, is a foolish delusion. It is an idle and thankless attempt to substitute our wisdom for the appointments of God, and can end in nothing but disappointment and destruction. The same principle applies to every stage and period of the Christian life. When we no longer come to Christ for grace, we receive no more, and the spiritual life is starved and will ultimately be destroyed. When men cease to work with God in the matter of their salvation He refuses to work with them. Salvation is all of grace, but it is grace given to those who will receive and use it.

If the feeble stirrings of spiritual life in the soul be repressed, for any cause, or upon any plea, the poor sinner, at each repetition of the folly, writes his own doom, pronounces his own sentence of condemnation. He thus consigns himself to the darkness and corruption of his natural state, and willingly accepts the eternal death, which consists in entire separation from God, and utter destitution of the happiness which God alone can give. Our merciful and long-suffering Saviour does not, indeed, often take the deluded servant of sin at his word, when first he is guilty of this wrong to his own soul. He permits His Spirit of light and life to abide in us still. Again and again the word of reconciliation, the blessed Gospel of the Son of

God is heard. And, again and again, the Spirit of Christ in the soul moves and stirs within us to produce conviction and obedience. If all these efforts for our salvation are through life resisted, the Spirit will leave us, all spiritual life will be extinct, and the soul will be given over to the corruption it loved, and to the death it has chosen.

PHYSICAL ANALOGIES TO THE DIVINE LIFE IN THE SOUL OF MAN.

The external and material world is the type and expression of the inner and spiritual world. The Scriptures copiously employ the analogies of nature as representative of spiritual truths. The physical life of man in every possible variety of illustration is made to symbolize the Divine life in the soul. Birth, infancy, growth, and maturity, all find their counterparts in the spiritual man. And the death of the body is the loathsome image of spiritual death—the separation of the soul from God by sin. So the economy of nature in the life and germination of seeds, and in the nourishment, growth, and fructification of plants; the care and diligence of the husbandman in preparing the ground, in sowing the seed, and in gathering the harvest, are continually used to image the spiritual life of the soul. There are, indeed, a few expressions apparently inconsistent with these numerous and constantly recurring delineations. Such are those expressions which represent the souls of wicked men as dead, as if life was utterly extinct, or had never existed in them. But these comparatively rare instances are easily reconciled with the general teaching of the Bible, by a reference to the *usus loquendi* of Scriptural language, which seldom employs our degrees of

comparison, but signifies the diminution, or lesser degree, of a thing, by its absence or negation. Numerous instances of this familiar form of speech will occur to all who are acquainted with the Bible.

By this Scriptural standard then, employing so profusely the analogies of nature to explain and illustrate the spiritual life of man, we can test the truth of those conflicting views of the religious life which have been now considered.

Does man himself, the noblest of these types, come into the world full grown, and amply endowed with strength and wisdom? Does the majestic forest rise up at once in its glory and grandeur by the one fiat of the Almighty? Let us go where the Bible sends us, to the fields and to the woods, for instruction. We behold a glorious harvest. Did it come there of itself? Did it grow up in a day? No. Its beginning was a parcel of dry, and apparently lifeless seed. If the seed had been really, as well as apparently, lifeless there would have been no harvest now. There was a hidden life in each one of those dry grains. That living germ is so small that you cannot see it. And when the germ is first developed into the young plant, how feeble, how tender is its life. It grows, but so gradually, so insensibly, that you cannot see it grow. We often say, after a succession of warm showers in the genial month of May, that we can *almost* see the plants grow, and the flowers unfold. But we never did see them. Their life is too mysterious, too hidden; their growth too gradual and insensible for that. Yet they grow on to the consummation of their glory.

Behold the image of the spiritual life in every fruit and forest tree. In the Winter you can hardly see the little bark-covered germ of leaf and flower. The warm sun of many Spring days has gradually swelled them, and very

slowly the buds opened, and tiny leaves were half expanded, giving early promise of beauteous foliage and of grateful shade. But a rude and comfortless North-Easter has been blowing for several days, and the whole process of expansion and growth has stopped. Every thing remains stationary, as if suddenly petrified in that precise stage of development which it had reached before this wintry storm. The sun and the warm South wind must return to nurture these buds of promise, or they will perish.

So it is with the spiritual life, the life of God in the soul of man. It is implanted there at the very dawn of existence, to be the power of an eternal life. It is the consequence of the connection of our manhood with Jesus, the Son of God. It is a life hidden and only to be gradually and insensibly developed into visible results, and into glorious fruition, by the agencies of grace, by the power of the Holy Ghost, operating through accustomed channels, and by preconstituted instrumentalities. If men perversely refuse to employ the agencies graciously established for the nurture of the spiritual life, that life must of necessity perish; and they will be driven away to the everlasting perdition which their sin and folly have provoked. Christian religion, therefore, addresses its invitations and its warnings to all men alike, because all have a Divinely imparted capacity to hear and obey the Gospel. By reason of this gracious gift every man must act in the great matter of religion at his own peril. For the judgment day will but proclaim the decision which each one has made, and re-affirm the sentence which each one has pronounced upon himself.

COMMON EXCUSES FOR REFUSING TO ENTER UPON A
CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Many persons who undoubtedly believe the whole Christian revelation, are deterred from a manly and open following of Christ, in an obedient submission to all the institutions of the Gospel, by various popular excuses for the neglect of a plain duty. One of the most common of these, an alleged sense of unworthiness, has been already considered and disposed of. It was not the worthiness of men that brought the Son of God from heaven for our relief. As sinners we were redeemed, and as sinners we are called to a participation of the benefits of redemption. What we really want to qualify us for a joyful acceptance, and a faithful use of the means of salvation, is a sufficient sense of the fact that we are sinners; and that, only by the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, and in the way in which He has promised to dispense His mercy, can we be saved from the everlasting destruction which our sins deserve.

Another common apology which men offer for this species of impiety is, the inconsistent lives of many of the professed Christians around them. But what has a man who believes in Christianity, and is seeking the salvation of his soul, to do with the faults or with the hypocrisy of those who call themselves Christians? If this religion had never produced any fruit of holy living, such a failure of what ought to be its effect might be a reason for refusing to believe its Divine origin. But this allegation has never been made by the bitterest enemies of Christianity; and it is contradicted by the personal knowledge of every man who has lived in a Christian community. Besides, every one who has studied this religion sees plainly that its prin-

ciples and precepts, if carried out, tend to produce the sublimest virtue of which human nature is capable.

What then does the objection amount to? Simply to these two positions:—1. That many of those who are honestly using this exalted rule of life, have not yet succeeded in reducing their corrupt natures, and their vicious habits, to conformity with this perfect standard. 2. That some Christians, while they profess to live according to the Gospel rule, are in fact living according to some other and lower rule. Both these cases are expressly mentioned and provided for in the Gospel; and are only proofs of the extent and inveteracy of that corruption of human nature which Christian religion proposes to cure; and which must be cured to make men capable of eternal felicities in the presence of God.

Is the dishonesty of this latter class of Christian professors any reason at all why we should not honestly try to do what they only pretend to do? Because there are failures and false pretences in every business of life, is that any reason why we should refuse to use any of the means of earning an honest livelihood? If an idle vagrant were to allege the large amount of fraud and cheating in the ordinary trades and occupations as a justification for his not working for his daily bread, would we admit the excuse? What a miserable self-deception then it is, when we allege a reason precisely equivalent to this for refusing to use the means of salvation—for neglecting to labor for the bread that cometh down from heaven?

Another way in which men excuse themselves from a performance of the external duties of religion is by a complacent estimate of their own moral character. They flatter themselves that persons so just and exact in the performance of the relative duties of life need have no fears

of the eternal wrath of the Almighty. Now, put this standard of morality, so far as our fellow men are concerned, as high as we please, and supposing that we come up to it, making no allowance for self-deception in the measure of ourselves by this standard, what does this boasted morality of ours prove? Why, that the Christianity, a large part of which we practically reject, has so forcibly impressed itself upon the public law and the public sentiment of the age and country in which we live, that its moral precepts have become the common rule of social life, and are incorporated into the civil law, and into a controlling public opinion. To this rule we have become habituated by education, and we are retained in the observance of it by self respect, by regard to our reputation, and by the love of that virtue which we have thus actually found to be a source of the purest pleasure.

If we are thus indebted to Christianity for all that is most ennobling in our character and position, how can we justify our neglect of that more important portion of the same system which determines our relations to God, and which provides the only sanction by which any part of this vital element of human society can be maintained? Out of his own mouth, therefore is the man condemned, who puts his morality in opposition to Christianity. The thing in which he prides and exalts himself, is but the faint reflection of Christianity itself; and in magnifying this morality he but testifies to the inestimable value and necessity of the whole religion that God has revealed for the salvation of men. For a man to allege his accidental obedience to a portion of this saving and ennobling truth as a reason for his contemptuous disregard of the rest, is a poor self-deception. Besides, the morality of the Gospel only impressed itself upon the world, so as to become the

law of the land, and the law of public sentiment, through the power of the Gospel as *an institution*, openly professed, and daily exhibited to men. Upon the principle of action which dispenses with that institution, the morality of the Gospel would have died with its promulger, and civilization, and all that adorns, refines, and ennobles human life, and human society; would have been banished long since from the earth.

These, and all other difficulties, which men permit to hinder them from the practical acceptance of the salvation of the Gospel upon its own terms, are evasions and sophistries, which have no foundation in common sense, or in the word of God. God made every man to be saved, and no truth can stand in the way of that salvation. God and truth are one. God cannot contradict Himself. Whatever then contravenes His design for our salvation is not a truth, but a falsehood. Only let men act in this most important matter in character with themselves as reasonable creatures, and the result is certain. They will accept the invitation of God's love and mercy. They will at once begin, and diligently continue, trusting only in Him for strength, to do their own part in the mighty work of salvation.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A MEANS OF GRACE, AND NOT A TESTIMONY OF HOLINESS.

All the views which have been presented of the requisites for confirmation, and of the necessity for perpetual progress in the Christian life, apply to that most solemn of all the ordinances of Christ's religion—the Sacrament of His body and blood. In all that has been said of the means of grace, and of their value and importance, reference has been intended to this the most eminent of them all. This Sacrament is a *means of grace*, appointed for our benefit, and adapted to our exigency. It is therefore a superstitious error which looks upon this Sacrament as too holy for the uses of any sincere and humble believer. The Christian who would interpret his access to this sacred feast as a testimony to his own sanctity is sadly mistaken. It is, on the contrary, another and the strongest possible testimony to his sinfulness, and to his need of a better righteousness, and greater strength than his own. The Church provides that none shall partake of this benefit but those who come with the most humbling confession of sin, and of their own unworthiness. It is in truth one of the gracious opportunities which Christ has provided for communicating Himself to His redeemed people, for

enduing them with His Spirit, with His purity, with His strength.

The misapprehension just mentioned has arisen in part from not understanding the words of St. Paul: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."—1 Cor. xi. 29. But St. Paul is speaking of those who had changed the Lord's Supper into a drunken feast. His condemnation of that iniquity is just as applicable to the hypocritical or the sensual abuse of any of the institutions of the Gospel. Every reason that exists for the use of any of the appointed means of grace—every reason for Baptism, for Confirmation, for public and private Prayer, is a reason, of the same force, for the coming of all adult persons to this Sacrament. It would be a mere repetition, therefore, of much that has been already said, to urge the importance of this duty. If it is essential that the Christian should grow in grace, then it is necessary that this most eminent means of grace should be faithfully used.

As many erroneous views, and some gross corruptions of religion, have clustered around this holy Sacrament, a distinct statement of its nature and meaning, will be a help to those for whom this work has been prepared, by removing some of the stumbling blocks which have been placed in the way of life by the mischievous ingenuity of men. The intimate connection of this great Sacrament with other parts of the doctrine and institution of Christ, will make this explanation a proper opportunity for the consideration of some of these connected truths.

There are two great errors in regard to the nature of this Sacrament. One of these degrades it from the most eminent of the means of grace, or mysteries, by which Christ is communicated to us, into a mere commemoration,

having only a natural effect. The opposite error equally degrades the Divine institution by changing it into a silly and blasphemous fable. These two errors will be sufficiently exposed by a simple exhibition of the true meaning of the Sacrament. But between these vicious extremes there are a great many conflicting views and statements, which have been the occasion of much angry controversy, and gratuitous abuse. Of all these last mentioned diversities, I do not hesitate to say, that they are for the most part the merest logomachies, or word disputes. The only real ground of controversy in regard to them is, that the parties will not condescend to agree upon the meaning they attach to the words which they use in common. Of course such a controversy can have no end, and no result but anger and bitterness.

The Communion Service of the Church presents this Sacrament to us in two principal aspects. First, As a Eucharistic and Commemorative Sacrifice. Secondly, As a participation of Christ. Under these two aspects we will consider it.

A EUCHARISTIC AND COMMEMORATIVE SACRIFICE.

The prayer of consecration applies to the Sacrament the specific title—"Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving"—which is the meaning of the popular name of this Sacrament—The Eucharist. Eucharist means praise, gratitude, giving of thanks, and the prayer calls the Sacrament—"this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." The other title, a Commemorative Sacrifice, is not precisely used in the Communion Office. But the commemorative character of the Sacrament is shown in every part of the Service,

and is not by any one denied; and all the terms applicable to a sacrifice are applied to this "perpetual memory" which we make before God. Its character is plainly designated by such terms as "Consecration," "Offertory," "Oblation," "Invocation," "Holy Mystery," and by the care which is taken to restrict the power of administering this Sacrament to those who have been solemnly admitted to the order of Priesthood.

It can hardly be doubted that this statement has already excited in a few of my readers a host of prejudices, the cherished growth of some of those logomachies to which reference was just now made. I have only to ask that these prejudices may be held in abeyance until we can agree upon the meaning which should be given to the words of the Prayer-book just now cited. It will then be clearly seen that I do not differ in this statement from any candid and intelligent Christian, who thoroughly eschews the two great errors already mentioned.

SACRIFICE.

The plain derivative meaning of the word sacrifice is, any thing made sacred, holy; any thing devoted, offered, or dedicated to God. The popular use of this important and familiar word corresponds precisely with the derivative sense. In this same latitude and comprehensiveness of meaning is the word used in every part of the Bible. This is the one common idea, which belongs to the word wherever it appears. Every thing is called a Sacrifice which includes this idea, and nothing else is so termed. A great many different kinds of Sacrifices are mentioned, but always the particular sort intended must be ascertained

from the context. The first sacrifices of which we have any account were of different kinds. Cain brought of the fruits of the earth, an Eucharistic offering. Abel offered the firstlings of his flock. St. Paul says, that "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Heb. xi. 4.

In the Old Testament there is more frequent mention made of the sacrifice of animals, because the typical nature of the former dispensations made the greater part of the external observances of religion to consist in these lively representations of the LAMB OF GOD that was slain from the beginning of the world. But the word is just as familiarly and as properly applied to the Sacrifice of righteousness, of thanksgiving, of joy, of praise, of a broken spirit. These expressions occur frequently in the Old Testament. When the typical dispensations were superseded by a higher and better one, the use of the word without reference to blood-shedding is more frequent than the other. "Present your bodies," says St. Paul, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Rom. xii. 1. He speaks of himself to the Philippians, as being "offered on the sacrifice of their faith," and of the gifts they had sent to him as "a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." Again he says, "We have an ALTAR." "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. xiii. 10, 15, 16. St. Peter says we are to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 St. Peter ii. 5.

The word Sacrifice is applied just as literally and as appropriately to one of these kinds of sacrifice as to another. The primary idea, which gives to any of them the name of

sacrifice, is as fully preserved in the one as in the other. There is no more figure in the one application than in the other. A sacrifice is an offering made to the Lord, no matter of what. If there is any figure in the use of this word in any of the modes already cited, that figure must be found in its application to brute and inanimate things. If one use of the word is more literal than another it is its application to the souls and bodies of men, to the powers of the mind and the affections of the heart. These are the offerings upon which the Almighty does indeed place a value. These are the things He desires. The offering of the fruits of the earth, and of living animals, can only be regarded by Him as the external expression of the real sacrifice of the heart, and mind, and life, which these offerings represent. If, therefore, there is any figure in the use of this word it is in its application to the outward emblem rather than to the thing signified. But, in truth, there is no figure in either case. Whatever is offered to the Lord is a Sacrifice.

To adapt religion to the compound nature of man as composed of soul and body, it was from the beginning appointed, that the spiritual sacrifices of faith, and penitence, and praise, and love should be embodied into certain prescribed external rites and actions. Under the law, besides the sacrifices of the Patriarchal dispensation, there were a great many ceremonial offences, the guilt of which could be taken away by a ceremonial atonement. This appointment was designed to keep more constantly in the mind of the people, by scenical representation, the real guilt of defilement of human nature, and the *propitiatory* sacrifice of the blessed Jesus, by which the sins of the whole world were to be taken away. But the Lamb of God offered upon Calvary was the only real *propitiatory sacrifice* ever made.

This was the only true satisfaction for sins ever offered to the Divine Majesty. It is only through the mediation and worthiness of that Sacrifice that every other sacrifice unto God has been made acceptable to Him.

PRIEST AND PRIESTHOOD.

These words, and the equivalent Greek and Latin terms, are inseparably connected with the idea of sacrifice, and they all have the same general meaning with the word sacrifice. The Latin, *Sacerdos*, is a derivative from the same root with sacrifice, and the Greek, *ἱερεύς*, has precisely the same derivative meaning, viz., "sacred, consecrated to God." The general idea intended to be conveyed by all these terms is that of a person having a right to come before God, and to offer unto Him holy gifts.

By transgression Adam became the enemy of God and a rebel against His just authority. This enemy and rebel could therefore render no service to his Maker, but such as would be an abomination in the sight of the HOLY ONE. And this is the natural condition of all the descendants of the first man.

But the state of Grace, which was provided for man's necessity, as soon as the state of nature became so dreadful, changes entirely these relations between sinful men and the Holy God. The Lamb of God, slain from the beginning of the world, in the purpose of the everlasting Father, became at once the Mediator, through whom the Eternal Presence was again accessible to man. Through the effectual mediation of Christ's all-atoning blood, man could come before the Mercy Seat, and offer to God the sacrifice of faith and love, of praise and thanksgiving.

The blood of Christ thus again *consecrated* human nature to the service of the Divine Majesty; and men became Priests unto God, privileged to offer gifts and sacrifices, both spiritual and material. The latter were merely ordained as representative of the former. Thus we find the two first sons of Adam offering sacrifices as Priests unto the Lord. This Patriarchal Priesthood continued through the period of the first^{*} and second[†] of those fearful apostacies which attested the deep corruption of our nature.

When the second apostacy became universal, God was pleased to call out from this degeneracy one family, to preserve the true notion of the Priesthood, and to offer acceptable sacrifices to Him, through faith in the blood of the everlasting covenant.[‡] And when this family became a great nation, God emphatically declared of them, "Ye shall be unto ME a kingdom of PRIESTS, and a holy nation." This appointment was made under circumstances the most solemn, and in a manner the most imposing. It is recorded in the 19th chapter of Exodus, as the fit preparation for the second publication of the law, to those who were thenceforward to be the consecrated witnesses and keepers of the truth. Thus we have the proper application, and the comprehensive meaning of the titles, Priest and Priesthood, solemnly affirmed by the mouth of the Lord. Those titles comprehended the whole people of Israel, who were consecrated, set apart, made holy for the service of Jehovah.

The same grace and wisdom which called the people of Israel to this high and holy estate, deemed it right and proper that out from this holy nation, this kingdom of Priests, there should be taken a smaller body, to be more especially the Ministers of religion.[×] From this latter body again was chosen a still smaller number[†] to be yet more

solemnly devoted to the service of God for special acts of worship. And from this last body one was ordained to be the High Priest. The terms of Priest and Priesthood are frequently applied, in a restricted sense, specially to these several orders, to whom the duties of the Priesthood were more specifically committed. This gradation of rank and division of offices, because it offended the pride of some, the Lord of Hosts was compelled to vindicate by the most fearful sanctions.

Men were made Priests, and empowered to offer acceptable sacrifices to God, by virtue of the *purpose* of His coming, who, as an atoning Priest, was to offer Himself a sacrifice to God. By the *actual* sacrifice of this glorious High Priest the consecration of humanity to the service of God was consummated and perfected. For sin itself, for the real guilt and corruption of human nature, there never was but one atonement, but one propitiation, but one satisfaction. Access in his own right to the presence of God, to offer gifts and sacrifices as a Priest, was never enjoyed but by one man—the Man Christ Jesus. By virtue of their union with this great High Priest alone have men been authorized to come into the presence of God, and offer before Him the sacrifice of their hearts and lives. So that Christ is emphatically all in all; the beginning and the end; the first and the last.

In precise accordance with what would seem to be the position and relations of Christians, is the language of the New Testament concerning them. St. Peter says, "Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter ii. 5. In the 9th verse of the same chapter he uses almost the very language employed by the Almighty to His ancient people. "But

ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God." St. John declares that Christ hath made us "Kings and Priests unto God and His Father." Rev. i. 6. Thus the Christian Church occupies precisely the place, in regard to these particulars, which the ancient Church had occupied. The members of both constituted a holy Priesthood unto the Lord, privileged to come before Him, to offer gifts and sacrifices.

As the Jewish and Christian Church alike was a polity, a social body, designed to have within itself the power of self-perpetuity; and compelled by the very purpose of its being to perform the most important and concerning functions of a social body politic, it was necessary, in either instance, that there should be a regular and distinct organization, and subordination of office and authority. Else the Church would have been no better than a disorderly mob, unable to perform the functions of a social body, and incapable of providing for its own preservation. Therefore, distinction of office, and social subordination, were essential ingredients in the constitution of the Church of God, under the former and the latter dispensation; "for God is not the Author of confusion," says an Apostle.

As God, of His mere mercy and goodness, conferred the Priesthood, in its most general and comprehensive sense, upon the whole nation of Israel, and upon all Christian people, so He could parcel out the several offices and degrees of that Priesthood in such manner and to such persons as to Him might seem most conducive to the accomplishment of His purposes of beneficence and love. We have seen how the Lord was pleased to distribute the

duties of the Priestly function under the old law; and with what imposing sanctions He maintained the integrity of this arrangement from impertinent violation by any who would presume to intrude into the performance of parts and duties not assigned to them by the Divine order. Speaking of this very subject in the Christian Church, St. Paul inquires, "Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all teachers?" 1 Cor. xii. 29. Afterwards he adds, "For God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the saints." xiv. 33.

The teaching under the new dispensation is not like to that under the old, in systematic arrangement and particularity. The reason is, that the new dispensation presupposes the continuance of the former one, in those respects in which it is not done away by the principles or the injunctions of the new. Therefore the sanctions by which the Almighty was pleased to ratify and confirm the distribution which he had made of the duties and offices of the Priesthood, under the old law, should be regarded as decisive indications of His purpose that Christians should respect any distribution of the same duties which He has been pleased to make under the Evangelical economy.

Our Church determines that God has appointed an order of men out of the general Christian Priesthood, to be especially engaged in the sacred functions of that Priesthood: and that He has ordained a subordination of rank and authority in the order thus specially set apart. As all Christian people are Priests, and a Priesthood, so the ordained Ministers of the sanctuary are more especially so, *in so far and in such particulars*, as their office and authority to minister in holy things exceeds that of the people at large. Their Priesthood differs, not in kind, but in degree, from that of the Christian community. For

all are sanctified, all are set apart, and permitted to offer sacrifices unto the Lord. But whatever the Minister may do which the private Christian may not do, in that particular does the Minister exercise the Priestly function in a more eminent manner than the layman. And therefore, according to that accommodated use of language which prevailed under the old dispensation, and has been perpetuated under the new, those who are appointed thus specially and eminently to exercise Priestly functions, may be termed, by restriction, Priests; and their order, the order of Priesthood.

But in strictness of speech the Priesthood belongs to all. In every act of sacerdotal function the people participate with the Minister. They are joint offerers. The Sacrament of Baptism is not ordinarily to be administered without the congregation, which unites with the Minister in the dedication of the child, and in the invocation of the Holy Ghost; although the Minister alone is authorized to affix the seal of God upon the subject. So in the Eucharist, the prayer of consecration and the entire service are said in the common name of the whole congregation, except the absolution, and the benediction, in both of which the Minister assumes the exclusive character imposed upon him to speak in the name and by the authority of Christ.

Slight as is the distinction between the offices of the Priesthood common to the whole people, and those appropriated to a particular order, very important consequences have been made dependent on its maintenance, and God requires us to respect His pleasure and His wisdom in ordaining that distinction. The plea of necessity is often urged as a reason for setting aside the appointments of God. That this plea may be justly urged, in cases where

individual preservation is in conflict with some provision of ceremonial law, is taught us by the example of David, who was permitted to eat the show bread. This instance comes under the principle that God will have mercy rather than sacrifice. But where the alleged necessity is only a supposed danger of religion itself; where one positive institution is violated in order to preserve another positive institution, which is supposed to be in danger; there the case of Uzzah seems to have been recorded for our instruction and warning. 1 Chron. xiii. This man verily thought that the Ark of God was about to be overturned. Now all the sacredness of the Ark was derived from God's positive institution. There was nothing to be hallowed in it, but the integrity of that institution. The apprehension of Uzzah proceeded from distrust of the Providence of God in the preservation of His own appointment. In order to supply this supposed deficiency of Divine care and power, the officious servant breaks the institution of the Almighty in one point in order to preserve it in another. He put forth his hand, not consecrated to that service, to save the ark from falling. His presumption was punished with instant death. This single instance effectually disposes of all those undiscovered islands which have been ingeniously suggested as a sufficient apology for the violation of one of God's positive appointments in order to maintain another. Baptism and the Lord's Supper derive their whole efficacy from the positive institution of God. They have no natural or inherent power to do good. Their virtue depends upon the integrity of the institution. Where the Author of that institution has not provided or allowed to us the means for its preservation, He does not require it at our hands, or restrain His grace to these ordinary channels of grace. The same Divine power that ordained the

Sacraments can sanctify and save us without them, where the institution cannot be maintained in its integrity. For one, unauthorized by the Divine appointment, to administer these Sacraments, because the proper Minister cannot be obtained, is the very presumption of Uzzah. God has the positive institutions of religion in His own keeping, and under His own care. All that He requires of any one of us is obedience, and fidelity, and zeal, and earnestness, in the discharge of that ministry to which we have been respectively called. He will not hold us responsible for the administration of functions not committed to our charge. And He will not lightly look upon our intrusion into offices to which we have not been appointed.

It is urged as an objection to the views above presented of Sacrifice and the Priesthood, that some theological writers arbitrarily restrict the meaning of these titles to a *propitiatory* sacrifice, and to a *propitiatory* Priest. But we have seen that, in this sense, there never was but One Sacrifice, and One Priest. We have seen also that this restricted sense is not the proper, or the derivative meaning of these words; that this is not their Scriptural use, or their popular use.

Again, it is said, that Romanists use the words in this restricted sense, and that to be as unlike them as possible we must not use these words at all, even in their proper and legitimate sense. But this canon would require us to give up the Bible itself, and a great many other good things, which Romanists have perverted and abused. The words, in their true and legitimate meaning, have been so incorporated into the common speech of men, and are so prominently used in the very charter of our salvation, that it is idle to think of removing them from the language. They are appropriate and significant, and they

will be employed in the language of religion as long as there is any religion. Let us not aid the adversary of men, in his effort to confound truth with error, by permitting these words, of universal use and acceptance, to be identified with the most stupid of the errors which have disgraced the heathen and the Romish apostacies.

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

All the bloody sacrifices of the old law were commemorative of the *promise* of redemption, and faintly shadowed the real *propitiatory* Sacrifice, by which redemption was to be made. By the living victim offered up and slain, and by the blood of the victim poured forth, the GREAT ATONEMENT was typically represented. When Messiah came He thereby determined and put an end to the memorials by which His coming had been prefigured. A new kingdom of Priests was about to be established, chosen out of every nation, and consecrated by the blood of Christ to offer sacrifice unto God. Jesus chose twelve men, "whom also He called Apostles," to be the chiefs, and after Him the founders of this new kingdom. With these twelve the blessed Saviour, on the very day in which He was to fulfill the former dispensation, and accomplish the whole system of types and shadows, engaged in keeping the paschal feast. This was the most eminent of the typical representations of Himself; the Paschal Lamb signifying the body and the blood of the promised and only true expiatory sacrifice for sin.

While they were feasting upon this Sacrifice, the real Priest and the real Victim so faintly represented by it, instituted, in place of this and of all the bloody sacrifices of

the law, the Sacrifice and the Memorial, thenceforth to be made under the new dispensation. For, "as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, Take, eat, **THIS** is my body, which is given for you; **DO THIS** in remembrance of **ME**. Likewise after supper He took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for **THIS** is **MY** Blood, of the new testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins; **DO THIS**, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of **ME**."

The Paschal Lamb was no longer to be killed in anticipation of the death of Christ, the true Passover: for He, the very Paschal Lamb of God, was now about to be slain. The blood of immolated victims was no longer to represent the precious blood of the Saviour of sinners. But *this bread* henceforth shall represent the body given for the life of the world. *This cup*, henceforth shall represent the all cleansing blood of the Son of God. Christians were hereafter to *do this*, to offer bread and wine to God, and to feast upon them, as the only instituted memorial of the death of the one only satisfaction for sin. And from the day of Pentecost to this hour, Christian people have made this memorial before God. By doing that which He commanded, by this sacrifice, they have "showed forth the Lord's death" till now, and they will continue to do it "until He come." / *Cor: XI. 26.*

By this instituted action Christians do continually manifest their faith in the great atonement, and their reliance upon it; and they thus plead before the Mercy Seat of the Eternal Father the all-sufficient merit of the one perfect sacrifice for sin made upon the Cross. The meritorious sacrifice, thus represented to the Divine Majesty, God has ever been graciously pleased to accept, and to knit together

by His Spirit into the one mystical body of His Son all who faithfully and devoutly make this memorial which He hath commanded.

This Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is a true Sacrifice, because it is an offering of the fruits of the earth to God. These gifts are consecrated, made holy, made a sacrifice—all which are equivalent expressions—when they are presented by the Christian people as an oblation to the Lord.

This Sacrament is a true Commemorative Sacrifice, because when the words of institution are pronounced by the lawful Minister, these fruits of the earth, these gifts which we have first offered to the Lord, are changed from their original character into real and effective representatives of the body and blood of Christ: and in that new relation are again presented to our Heavenly Father, as a more acceptable oblation, as a sweet smelling savor, as a precious memorial before God of the meritorious sacrifice of His Son, our Lord.

This Sacrament is a Eucharistic Sacrifice, because it contains within it the solemn oblation to God of the worship and obedience, of the praises and thanksgivings, of the hearts and lives, of the souls and bodies, of all who are engaged therein.

The Sacrifice having been thus made complete, then, according to the blessed and gracious institution of Christ, the worshippers are invited to draw near, to feast upon the sacrifice, to partake of the gifts which they have offered unto the Lord. Thus they enter anew into covenant with God—thus they are admitted into the most perfect, intimate, and endearing communion with Him whom they worship and adore.

In each part and stage of this sublime institution the

Holy Ghost is the present and effective Administrator. He puts it into the hearts of the people to offer. He consecrates them, and the gifts which they bring, to their respective offices. He changes the elements from their mere natural character into their instituted meaning and significance. He makes the reception of the bread and wine by the faithful to be the communion of the body and blood of Christ, in all their saving power and efficacy. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. x. 19—22.

THE ROMISH DOCTRINE OF SACRIFICE.

Bloody sacrifices were first instituted as types of the one atonement to be made upon Calvary; and as expressions of the faith of men in that promised atonement. But the institution was soon perverted by the foolish hearts of men into an imagined *propitiation* for sin; the offerings being supposed to have an intrinsic value in the sight of the Deity. This perverted notion led at last to the sacrifice of men and of children, as the most costly and acceptable offerings. Even the chosen people were often guilty of this great abomination, for which they were severely reprov- ed.

In spite of the emphatic warning contained in the heathen apostacy, and in direct opposition to many strong declarations of the New Testament, affirming that but one

propitiatory sacrifice for sin has ever been made, the new Romish Creed asserts that "In the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead."—Creed of Pope Pius IV.

The doctrine thus broadly stated in the Creed of Romanism is the precise form of the ancient heathen apostacy from the truth. It attempts to change the Memorial which God has instituted of the One Sacrifice for sin, which He had provided, into that One Sacrifice for sin. The heathen, by stupidly supposing the instituted types of the promised Atonement to be a real propitiation and satisfaction to the Divine Majesty, degraded the character of the Supreme Being, by representing Him to be such an one as themselves, capable of being appeased with the fat of fed beasts. The Romish corruption does the same thing in a different way. In order to make the commemorative sacrifice of the One Atoning Sacrifice, itself a propitiation and satisfaction for sins, the theory stultifies human nature, and thereby insults and degrades the Divine Majesty, for man was made in the image of God. This theory, which goes under the name of transubstantiation, declares that the bread and wine of the Sacrament are "truly, really and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ," so that the things which seem to be bread and wine are no longer so; but "that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, of the whole substance of the wine into the blood."—Creed of Pius IV.

To believe this is to contradict the evidence of all the senses, and thereby to destroy the only means which God has given us of knowing any thing. If we are not to believe the concurrent testimony of all the senses, then the foundations of faith, as well as of science, are taken away, and all truth and all knowledge are at an end.

One of the most familiar and profitable parts of the Romish religion is founded upon the dogma above cited, that, "In the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead." At the death of every Romanist all the feelings of affection and piety of the surviving relatives are excited, to bring this dogma into play, for the release of the soul of the deceased from purgatory, by the purchase of a sufficient number of masses to be said in his behalf. This is the known and admitted consequence of the dogma, familiarly practised upon without scruple or doubtfulness every day. Such a consequence is evidently destructive of all correct notions even of natural religion, and confounds all reasonable apprehensions of the relations between God and His offending creature. But if this doctrine of sacrifice in the Mass, and the corresponding doctrine of transubstantiation be true, then it is certain that every sale of a Mass, however disguised, is an actual sale of the Lord Jesus Christ; and every Priest who offers the sacrifice of the Mass for a reward, re-enacts the part of the traitor Judas, and receives for his wages the price of blood.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IS THE PARTICI-
PATION OF CHRIST.

Jesus Christ, being God and Man, is the medium of reunion between the Divine and human nature. The Divine Life which men receive to make them the children of God, and the heirs of heaven, is bestowed by the communication to them of the Divine and human nature of their Lord and Saviour. Christ himself has ascended into heaven. And He declared that "it was expedient" for

us that He should go there, in order that He might send the Holy Ghost to be the effective Agent in the commencement and consummation of the union between Christ and His people. We know from many places of the Divine word, that Christ is to remain at the right hand of God, to be our High Priest and effectual Intercessor, until He shall come again to judge the world in righteousness. Until this second Advent of Christ, the Spirit is the sole efficient Minister of Christ's kingdom in the world. By the mysterious oneness of the Divine nature, where the Spirit is, there also is the Father and the Son. Through the Spirit the Father and the Son take up their abode, as Christ has promised, with those who love Him. St. John xiv. 23. By the Spirit is the blessed Saviour always with the Ministry He has established. St. Matt. xxviii. 20. By the Spirit is He present with the two or three gathered together in His name. St. Matt. xviii. 20. By the Eternal Spirit, sent into our hearts, is that mysterious union effected between Christ and His people, which constitutes the hope and the life of man. Many are the ways by which this union is begun, strengthened and completed, but in all of them "worketh that one and the self-same Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 11. It is the Spirit which broods over the waters of Baptism, and incorporates the child of Adam into the body of Christ. 1 Cor. xii. 13. By the ministration of the same Spirit we continually receive the communication of the body and blood of Christ, to nourish our souls and bodies to everlasting life. For He saith, "I am the bread of life. He that eateth me even he shall live by me. Because I live ye shall live also." St. John vi. 48, 57; xiv. 19.

This is a declaration of the simple truth of the provision made for our salvation, without any explanation of the

mode of the Spirit's operation in the production of these Divine effects. [This revelation of the fact is enough for faith, which implicitly relies upon the word of eternal truth.] The plain manifestation of a fact is all that men require in regard to the phenomena of external nature. But the vain wisdom and the licentious curiosity of men disdain the humble and appropriate faith in religion which they are content to exercise in nature. By the effective ministration of the Spirit the same Christ, who is our life, becomes our spiritual food and drink, in the Sacrament of His body and blood. Here is a deep mystery :—the mode of the spiritual communication of the body and blood of Christ is hard to understand. And forthwith, out of this difficulty, there arise two schools of theology, each one seeking in its own way to remove the difficulty.

A mistake is sometimes made here by the defenders of the truth, in regard to the place in this transaction wherein the mystery lies. The mystery consists in the communication of the life of Christ to men. This mystery pervades the whole scheme of redemption. St. Paul assures us that the members of the ancient Church “did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was CHRIST.” 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. It is only the same great mystery which reappears in all its force and offensiveness to human pride, in each one of the appointed agencies and channels for its accomplishment. How Christ can be formed in our hearts by the Spirit, and how the life, thus derived, can be fed and nourished by the body and blood of Christ imparted in the Sacrament, are only parts of the same continuous and ever recurring mystery, which runs through the whole plan of salvation. The mystery does not lie at all, as we shall see, in the plain and simple

words of Christ when He instituted this Sacrament. These words are familiar, intelligible, and of universal use; and nothing but the merest wantonness of interpretation can find any difficulty in them. The real difficulty and mystery lie behind the words, in the fact, that any material agency can be the means of conveying the life of God, and the nourishment of that life into the soul of man.

One of the schools to which I have referred, disposes of this whole mystery of salvation by quietly resolving all the expressions which indicate it into mere Eastern metaphor and hyperbole. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they say, is nothing more than a memento, to put us in mind of the event which transpired on Calvary 1800 years ago; and to assist us to apprehend the reality of that event.

An opposite school proposes a theory of the *mode* of the communication of the body and blood of Christ to us; and thereby reduces a sublime spiritual mystery to an absurd, bungling, and contradictory physical hypothesis.

I have said that the words of institution of this Sacrament present no difficulty, and involve no other mystery, than the general one, that the life of our souls is derived solely from union with the Divine and human nature of Christ; and that it must be nourished and completed by *constituted external agencies*.

The symbolical delivery of a thing, as being effective to pass the possession and property of that thing, has been common in all nations and ages. The delivery of a key, when so expressed, is a delivery of the house. The delivery of a little twig becomes, by positive institution, the delivery of a whole tract of land. Every day the entire property and full possession of landed estates are given, in this country, by the delivery of a piece of paper, called a

deed. To this universal custom of mankind all language has been framed, and no one ever thinks of misunderstanding the person who calls the instituted symbol of a thing by the name of the thing itself. So we perfectly understand the Apostle when he says, "that Rock was Christ." So our Saviour spoke, in precise accordance with the universal language of mankind, when delivering the new symbols of His body and blood, He said, "THIS is my body," &c. The words were the plainer, because they had just been engaged in feeding upon the instituted symbols of the same body and blood under the economy then about to be terminated. By the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, the instituted symbol becomes, to the worthy recipient, the communication of the body and blood of Christ. Human incredulity will not receive this Divine mystery, unless it can understand *how* the communication is effected. Therefore it invents the debasing hypothesis, that the symbol is actually destroyed, and that the flesh, and blood, and soul, and divinity of the blessed Jesus are in the paten and in the chalice, in place of the symbol, although all the appearances of bread and wine remain.

This extravagant conceit, by which the nature of a Sacrament is entirely overturned, was at first but a wanton speculation of the schoolmen. In the gradual progress of corruption it has become, with a large sect, an article of faith, to be held on pain of damnation.

By the universal construction of human language the words of our Lord were always plain and simple. But the usages of modern society make them even more familiar and intelligible than formerly. Take a Bank note, promising to pay five dollars. We call it five dollars; and it is five dollars, in virtue and effect. But why do we call it, and why is it, in fact, five dollars? Because, being a

genuine document, issued by competent authority, it truly represents five dollars. It has the power and worth of five dollars wherever the drawer is known. Instead of its being an abuse of language to call this paper five dollars, it is the most common and approved, and universal form of speech, and every one understands the meaning of that form. But here comes in the theory of transubstantiation, and kindly undertakes to explain to us why it is proper to call this note five dollars. To make this language correct and intelligible, it says, you must believe that the paper and the engraving, and the signatures, are all gone; the accidents of these things indeed remain, but the substance is gone; what you really hold in your hand now is five round pieces of silver, with the United States stamp of one dollar on each! Such stolid folly was bad enough when considered merely as the trifling of literary and scholastic subtlety. But what shall we think of it when such phantasies are made, first the watchword of a party in the Church of Christ; and then the symbol of a sect, which imposes this as an article of faith essential to salvation!

If we apply this same illustration to the first mentioned process of getting rid of the mystery in the Lord's Supper, which is known by the name of the Zuinglian hypothesis, we shall find our Bank note to be neither five silver dollars, nor the effective representative of that sum, but merely a memento, to put us in mind of five dollars.

The subject of religion is so awful and overwhelming that there is constant danger of allowing the reason to be put in abeyance by loud and boastful pretences, and by imposing assumptions. All that God has revealed, as well as all that He has made, is above our reason. Nothing that He has revealed or made is contrary to it. Our heavenly Father appeals to the reason of His children for

the manifestation of the truth. The religion which He has revealed leads to the highest cultivation of the reason ; and if that religion stultified the nature it has so highly exalted, it would be self-contradictory.

It is a blessed and glorious truth, that Christ in this Sacrament does, by His Spirit, impart Himself to His people, and give to them the saving might and purifying excellency of His body and blood. Because this is a spiritual operation it is not the less, but the more real. No carnal union could be so perfect, or so enduring, as the spiritual union which is thus effected. How this miracle of grace is accomplished, how the Spirit acts here, as in all other instances of His ministration, faith asks not ; but meekly receives the benefit, and humbly adores the Saviour God, whose infinite bounty bestows this wondrous gift.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARTAKING OF THIS SACRAMENT.

The qualifications of persons to be admitted to this Sacrament are precisely the same as for admissions of adults to Baptism and Confirmation. These several institutions are all designed to be, on our part, a full, entire, and hearty submission of ourselves to the service and obedience of Christ. The natural effect, independent of the supernatural grace, of such a solemn, external, and public confession of Christ, and pledge of fealty and obedience to Him, is, in each one of these instances, to increase, strengthen, and deepen the feelings thus strongly exercised. In regard to this important natural effect, the Lord's Supper has a very great advantage over its connected institutions, in that they are to be used but once, while this must be

continually repeated. To the question, "What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?" the Catechism answers, "To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death; and be in charity with all men."

Any one can see that such a self-examination as this, continually recurring, and faithfully conducted, under the influences of this most solemn institution, and issuing in a renewed public self-dedication to the cause of Christ, and of righteousness, is the most effectual natural means of improvement and of moral progress, that can be conceived of. To secure the full benefit of this natural efficacy of the institution, the Minister is required to give notice of the Communion, upon the Sunday or other Holy-day preceding, and to exhort the people to a due preparation for this Holy Sacrament. The searching and comprehensive language of the two exhortations in the Prayer book appointed for this purpose, make one of the best manuals for the assistance of those who are preparing for the Holy Communion. But the general principles therein set forth are carried out into minute details, and very important and valuable directions, in many other private manuals which holy men have prepared and published from time to time. Some one of these should be the closest companion of every communicant.

When we add to this natural effect, the supernatural grace that is surely pledged to every faithful receiver of these holy mysteries, every Christian must see how he wrongs his own soul, and keeps up the barrier between himself and heaven, by neglecting to avail himself of every opportunity of using this Divinely provided appliance for

his salvation. The great end of this, as of all the doctrines and institutions of Christian religion, is to produce in each subject of redemption the mind and character of Christ. Our distance below this exalted standard of excellence is infinite. How foolish and sinful then, the waste of time and opportunity, which will neglect this most eminent means of grace and growth, which God, of His infinite mercy, has provided for our necessity !

These special and eminent means of Grace, which we have been considering so largely, do not constitute the whole nourishment of the Divine Life in the soul of man. The most effective and powerful of all the means of Grace has not been particularly treated of; because it is involved in every other means, and because no popular misapprehensions have confused the minds of men in regard to the nature and duty of PRAYER. Much of the virtue and efficacy of the Sacraments and rites of the Christian religion comes from the fact that Prayer is made to be an integral part of each one of them. But if the spiritual life received its fitting nourishment only at these extraordinary times and occasions, it would languish and die. Herein, again, the analogy is close between the physical and the spiritual creation. The growing plant must receive continued nourishment. The animal body must be supplied with daily food. These are the necessary conditions of health and life. So the spiritual life of the soul must be fed with daily bread. Prayer is the medium by which the soul procures this daily bread, this continued nourishment. Prayer performs, in the spiritual economy, the office assigned in the vegetable economy to the minute radicles, which are spread out to be the purveyors of nutriment to the whole tree. Isolate these radicles from the source of supply, even for a short time, and the tree must

perish. Let daily Prayer cease, and spiritual life will soon wither and die.

The three great forms of this holy exercise are Private prayer, Family prayer, and Public prayer. These all belong together, and must support, and help each other. Prayer is thus applied to man in each of the leading aspects of his nature, as an individual, as a member of the Family, and as a member of Society. (The habitual neglect of either of these forms of Prayer is fatal.) The disruption of the Family bond, by the refusal of God's anointed Priest to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, for his household and with them, is one principal cause of the social evils with which the country is afflicted. The Family is the foundation of the Church and of the State, and if this primeval institution be dissolved, or loosened, human nature must deteriorate, and all other interests of mankind be irreparably injured.

The ministration of the Holy Ghost employs every part and incident of human life, and all the Providential government of the world, as means of Grace, and helps to salvation. Health and sickness, joy and grief, pleasure and pain, wealth and poverty, are all, when sanctified by faith and prayer, instruments of holiness. They are a part of the healthful discipline which God uses to prepare a people for Himself. The heir of salvation must work together with God here also. He must strive to make each of these estates and incidents of life an occasion for the exercise of those affections towards God, which they respectfully require, and which they are designed to cultivate.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHURCH IDENTIFIED. THE CREED. TRUE TESTS OF THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH, THE ONLY BASIS OF UNITY AMONG CHRISTIANS.

IF our Saviour did set up a visible kingdom in this world, if His Church is more than a mere abstraction, if it is a real body, then there must be some criterion for identifying this body, through all ages, and in every land. The tendency of the human mind to change and innovation, and its constant subjection to imposture, render it absolutely necessary that there should be some certain test, by which the identity, in any time and place, of a society claiming to be a part of the spiritual corporation established by Christ, may be determined.

The bare assertion of any person, party, or sect, is no test of this identity, for that will prove most for the most unscrupulous, and really determines nothing. The only reasonable test that can be proposed, is, to ascertain those things which, in the original institution of the Church, Christ made to be the essential constituent elements of its being and life. When these are once certainly ascertained, whenever and wherever we recognize these same things, then and there is the Church of Christ.

It is objected to this, that to ascertain the original insti-

tution of Christ, and to compare any existing society with that institution, demand inquiry, careful examination, and the exercise of intelligence. The allegation upon which this objection is founded is certainly true; but instead of constituting a real objection to the test proposed, it is but a statement of the fact, that God has thus actually dealt with man in regard to the whole subject of religion. In no other way can the true religion be distinguished from the grossest imposture. God gave to man intelligence for the very purpose that he might exercise it in this its noblest field of investigation. Thus only can reason be employed in the service of God.

Christianity is a reasonable religion, and God addresses it to the intelligence, as well as to the affections of His reasonable creatures. Corrupt human nature, on the contrary, inculcates the principle that it is easier and better for each man to take his religion upon trust; that it is impossible for the reason to decide between so many conflicting claims; and so, the Pagan clings to his idols; and the Mahometan swears by his Prophet; and the Papist submits his neck to the yoke of a heathenized and grossly corrupt Christianity.

But when God addresses His truth to the reason of men, He does not appeal to mere unassisted reason. He furnishes aids, helps, and facilities, to the private reason, by the right use of which, the few and simple facts that constitute the saving truth of God may be ascertained. And each man is responsible, not only for the exercise of his reason in searching after truth, but for the faithful use of those helps to the reason, which God has provided.

This principle is not only assumed in the whole character of Divine revelation, but was specially determined by a

very remarkable transaction, recorded in the early part of our Saviour's ministry:

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." St. Matt. xi. 2—6.

The truth emphatically set forth by this narrative is, that God appeals only through the reason of men to their faith. He demands faith in things supernatural, and entirely beyond the power of reason to comprehend. But the evidence upon which He makes this demand, the proof that the things to be believed are revealed by Him, He submits exclusively to the reason He has bestowed. Unreasoning credulity is inconsistent with the exalted nature which Christianity recognizes, and aims to cultivate in man.

The message sent by John the Baptist to our Saviour required a plain, categorical answer to the question, whether Jesus was the Messiah. An answer was desired which might relieve John and his disciples from all painful doubt, and from all laborious and earnest exercise of their own minds, upon the evidences of truth. Like our modern seekers after an infallible tribunal, who want to be relieved upon the whole subject of religion from the painful discipline of uncertainty, and from the hard task of thinking and reasoning, if Christ had complied with their request, and given them the affirmative and positive answer they

required, they would have been abundantly satisfied. But He, who came to exalt and ennoble all the faculties of man, refuses to minister to the intellectual indolence, or to pander to the simple credulity of men. He furnishes to these honest inquirers ample materials for the exercise of their own reason in the determination of the two questions, His Divine Mission, and His Messiahship.

The answer, as an appeal to human intelligence, is wonderfully full and comprehensive. In this brief compass it contains a pregnant reference to all the great branches of the Christian evidences, external and internal, miracles, prophecies, the adaptation of this religion to the character of God, and to the necessities of man. From a diligent comparison of what they now saw and heard with the Old Testament Scriptures, the inquirers are told to determine for themselves the question which they had proposed to our Lord.

God does not appeal to the reason of His creatures without furnishing to that reason abundant materials for its faithful exercise. He furnishes a concurrence of testimonies to the truth, the meeting and blending of which in one conclusion give sufficient reasonable assurance of the truth to all who will honestly use these varied helps. These testimonies are: 1. The witness of God in the works of Creation. 2. The witness of God's Spirit in the soul. 3. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, containing the truth in the historic order in which it was revealed. 4. The Church, keeping the same Scriptures and setting forth a brief compendium of the faith which they contain. 5. The Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, in which the same faith is visibly, and symbolically represented. In these Sacraments each Christian man is continually required to become an *actor* in holy offices, which

witness, in the most impressive manner, to the senses, to the understanding, and to the heart, the truths of redemption, and the way of life.

OF THE CREED.

The only one of the foregoing testimonies which it is necessary for us to examine in this place is, the authority of the Church to set forth a compendium of the faith which all must profess. This authority has been constantly exercised from the beginning. Yet it is now greatly questioned, and the most variant theories are current respecting it. A great number of persons declare that the Creed is a gradual development of Christian doctrine, made in the course of ages, by a process which has been hitherto, and is always to be in full and effective operation. The parties who hold this theory differ very widely in its practical application. One very liberal school of its maintainers says, that the development may be made by any sect, or by a single person, and that the development may be, by taking away, as well as by addition. Another school contends, that the development may be made by any number of Christians, who can obtain the concurrence of the Pope of Rome in their determination, and that the development must always be by addition. This only differs from the last mentioned school by providing for an accumulation of doctrines, and by restraining infallibility to one man at a time, instead of allowing it to all who choose to claim it. There is a third school among the holders of the theory of development, which limits the power of the Church to develop articles of faith to the first four or five centuries of the Christian era.

A thorough examination of this subject will show that the whole theory of ecclesiastical development of THE FAITH is false; and that the Church has proposed to all men the same Faith, from the beginning, until now.

THE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF THE CREED PROVED : 1. BY THE
NECESSITY OF THE CASE.

There was an *a priori* necessity that the whole saving faith of the Gospel should be gathered into a short formula, to be distinctly recognized, and confessed, by the first converts to Christianity. The institution of Christ makes Faith to be the mean of salvation, and commands all men to be baptized into a Faith. What faith? Christian religion does not treat men as idiots, or as the subjects of a sort of necromancy. It treats them as intelligent beings, who must know, and profess, in whom they trust, and what they believe.

The Faith is no where collected into a compact formula in the Scriptures, but it is scattered miscellaneously, through the whole volume, in the forms of history, prophecy, song and parable. Why this omission to gather up these scattered truths, if the Author of the Scriptures made no provision by which this most needful task should be accomplished, under such sanction, as to satisfy all fair and ingenuous minds of the truth of the faith which they were required to believe? A distinguishing glory of the Christian religion is that it consists of facts. It is a fact, that the Author of the Bible instituted the Christian Church before He caused the New Testament to be written. He commanded that Church, then, to baptize men in a

certain faith, and He called the same Church "the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. iii. 15.

This Divine provision furnishes a complete answer to the question just proposed. The articles of faith are not collected in the Bible, because the Author of the Bible made ample arrangement for their collection in another way. Men were to be baptized into a belief. Christianity is a religion addressed to the reason and intelligence of men. *Ex necessitate rei*, therefore, the terms of that belief must be stated to the catechumen in *a form of words, which he could learn and understand*. This is necessary now. How much more necessary was it before the New Testament was written; long before it was collected; and for the ages during which, as a book in manuscript, it was utterly inaccessible to nine-tenths of the Christian people?

There was an *a priori* necessity for the existence of a Creed, in the beginning, on another ground. The Sacraments, which symbolically set forth the faith to the eye, and in action, would be mere enigmas, if unaccompanied by a verbal formula, explanatory of the mysteries contained in them. Some writers contend that the words of institution in Baptism constituted the whole of the Creed for some ages. But these words, taken by themselves, have no apparent meaning and no rational purpose. They do not propose an intelligible faith. To make the Sacraments, and the use of the words of institution, *intelligent acts*, the believer must know and confess, who is the Father, who the Son, who the Holy Ghost; and who that Lord, whose death he is commanded to show forth.

2. BY SCRIPTURAL ALLUSIONS.

This necessity of the case, requiring the Apostles to embody the faith in a "form of words," to be learned and professed by the Christian converts, fixes the meaning of several passages of Scripture, as distinct allusions to such a formula. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. i. 13. That which Timothy was to hold fast was, not a sentiment, or a feeling, but a "Form;" a "FORM OF SOUND WORDS." What could this form be but the Creed, which we find that every Church did faithfully keep as a sacred deposit?

Again, St. Paul plainly refers to such a symbol—the "form of sound words"—in the Church at Galatia, when he says, "Though we or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 8-9. How could these new converts test the doctrine of an Angel, or of the Apostle, by the Gospel they had first received, unless the great truths of that Gospel were embodied in a "form of sound words," then in their possession, by which they might measure the subsequent doctrine? Again, the same Apostle exhorts—"Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith." Rom. xii. 6. How could they do this, unless the whole saving faith had been already embodied in a formula which all possessed, so as to enable them to understand and keep "the *proportion of faith*?"

3. BY THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A FORMULA IN ALL THE CHURCHES.

Such a "form of sound words" as that committed by St. Paul to Timothy, we actually find in every Church of the first ages, of which we have account at all. This form was sacredly kept and called by such emphatic titles as, "The Symbol," "The Creed," "The Rule." This symbol distant Churches communicated to each other, as the test and proof of their respective soundness in the faith.

The symbols thus held by the different Churches are identical in doctrine, but *indefinitely variant in expression*. There are two general types of these formulas, the Western, now called the Apostle's Creed, and the Eastern, now called the Nicene Creed.

But because the latter formula was authoritatively set forth by the Council at Nice in part, and by a subsequent Council, it is maintained that this Creed was a development of Christian doctrine, by Church authority, to meet the rising heresies of the time. There are several considerations which show that this supposition is at variance with the facts.

1. The general type of the Nicene formula is as old as the Apostle's Creed. All the notices that we have of either form are incidental references to them, or citations from them, or comments upon them. From these sources of evidence we can now recover and identify both these types of the Creed, *as the recognized symbols of the Churches*, long before the Nicene Council. The oldest extant writing in which the Creed is formally recited, is the Apostolic Constitutions. This, being an Eastern work, presents us with the Creed in its Nicene type, nearly a century before the meeting of that Council.

2. We know that the general uniformity of the symbols of faith held in the Churches had given use to the tradition, in the fourth century, that the Apostles composed one common formula before their separation. But the substantial sameness, and circumstantial variety, of these symbols, make it much more probable that the Apostles acted in this matter, as they did in composing the books of Scripture. That is, each one gave to the Churches he founded, such a form of Confession of Faith, as was best suited to the capacity and circumstances of the people. Hence we find the two general types already mentioned—a shorter form for the ruder Western nations, and a more elaborate statement of the same truths for the Eastern nations, who were familiar with the refined and subtle philosophies of the Greek, Jewish, and Persian sages.

3. When the Fathers of Nice assembled to consider the opinions of Arius, they evidently spoke, in setting forth the Creed, as *witnesses*, merely, of the ancient faith. The Bishops seem to have produced for general inspection the symbols of their respective Churches. These were compared together, and tested by the Scriptures; and the formula which most clearly rebuked the rising heresy, and was most certainly an authentic form of the primitive Creed, was adopted and authoritatively published by the whole Council.

This conciliar examination and publication only extended to the part of the Creed which had been brought into controversy. But *we know*, that the articles, subsequently examined and published by the Council of Constantinople, formed a part of the very Creeds, which had been submitted to the Council of Nice. For the history of this Council recites at large the Creeds presented by some of the Bishops, as the ancient Creeds of their respective

Churches; and these Creeds *have all the articles subsequently passed upon by the Council of Constantinople.* The inference, therefore, is irresistible, that those Creeds were used *entire*, before and after the Council of Nice, *upon the ancient authority, by which they had been transmitted to the several Churches:* and that the office of the Council was nothing more than to compare them together, reject those which had been fraudulently altered to suit a purpose, and authenticate the true and genuine.

4. The Councils, in the form of their several acts, mark the distinction, as strongly as possible, between their office as Witnesses of the ancient faith, and their office as interpreters and expositors of the same faith. In the first character they simply recite the Creed. In the second, they explain and defend its articles by the most subtle and elaborate definitions. The Council of Ephesus, which put forth a great many of these definitions, expressly denounces the penalty of deposition against any clergyman, who should propose to a catechumen any other than the Nicene Creed, as a Confession of Faith.

For these and other reasons I hold that the Nicene Creed was not a development of Christian doctrine, originated in the fourth century, but that it is one form of the ancient deposit of the faith, "committed" by the Apostles and Apostolic men to the Churches which they respectively planted. The existence of such a Creed, in the first age of the Gospel is as clearly made out as any Christian verity can be. Certainly the evidence is not stronger for the canon of Scripture; and I do not see how any historical testimony could be made stronger.

One of the most important issues now before the world, is between the principle of one, full, and perfect revelation of the truth, given by Christ and His Apostles; and the

notion of a continuous inspiration, and ever changing revelation, of which the religion of the Bible was a mere starting point. Mormonism, Romanism, and the latest Infidelity, are founded upon the latter assumption.

The Protestant Episcopal Church holds the first alternative in this momentous issue. She maintains that the religion delivered to us by Christ and His Apostles is a perfect and finished revelation, sufficiently attested to the private reason, by a CONCURRENCE of Divine Witnesses, to enable every man to know, with certainty, the things which he must believe in order to be saved. These Witnesses are, the Holy Scriptures; the Church delivering to us now the same testimony which she gave in the Apostle's days; and the Sacraments. Each one of these parts, muniments, and witnesses of Christianity, stands upon the same foundation; and is sustained and assailed by the very same arguments. The Infidel uses the arguments, which a few Christians employ against some of them, equally against them all. Let us hope that this bad use of a bad argument will bring all true Christians nearer to each other, and induce them to stand fast, "striving together for the faith of the Gospel."

THE TESTS OF IDENTITY CONSTITUTE THE ONLY PRACTICABLE BASIS OF UNITY.

The Church of Christ being a perpetual and divinely instituted corporation, it is a plain and undeniable proposition, that the identity of the Church, in all ages and nations, must consist in the continued existence of those things which, by the original institution, made the being and life of the corporation. We have seen that the being

and life of the Church consisted, by Christ's institution, of these three things, the Faith which He revealed, the Ministry which He commissioned, and the Sacraments which He ordained.

Disease is not destruction. Corrupt additions do not take away the institution of Christ. Timely Reformation may cure the disease of the spiritual, as well as of the civil body politic, and remove the foreign accretions which have been fastened upon it. Reformation is, in fact, the agency which Almighty God has used, under every dispensation, for restoring the purity, and for securing the continued existence of His Church. To make any Reformation effective and healthful, the normal condition of the Church, the real institution of Christ, must be sufficiently witnessed to the private reason of all honest and diligent inquirers after truth, to be the ONE STANDARD, by which to measure all alleged corruptions, and all proposals for reformation. We have seen that God has furnished this testimony, and thereby established this necessary standard.

The profession of the *one* Faith revealed for salvation, and indubitably defined by the Church in the beginning; the continued existence of the Ministry which Christ appointed; and the due administration of the Sacraments which He instituted; are plain, simple, and conclusive tests of the identity of Christ's Church, at all times and in all places. Where these essential things are, there is the Church which Christ founded.

These same great features of Christ's institution constitute the only broad and comprehensive basis of Unity, upon which all Christian people can come together. The evils of separation between Christians have become so great that there is now a yearning in many minds for Unity of some sort. Many factitious unions have been resorted to, with

little success, to satisfy this yearning. But an effective Unity can only be secured upon the basis of the original institution of Christ—the Faith, the Ministry, and the Sacraments, which He made to be the constituent elements of His Church. This basis of unity does not require that men should give up their religious opinions, however various these may be, but only that they shall not hold these opinions in the form of sect symbols, thus isolating themselves from the great body of Christian people. It merely demands that men should be reasonable enough to distinguish faith from opinion; and upon the common ground of the One Faith, once delivered to the saints, and continuously professed in the Church ever since, mingle freely in the One fold, of the One Shepherd.

It is unhappily true that a large portion of mankind will not be governed by their reason in the matter of religion. But this is one melancholy feature of that degeneracy of nature which true religion strives to remove. The Almighty cultivates and exalts the reason of the creature whom He made in His own image, by continually appealing to that reason in the whole system of revealed religion. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord,” is, virtually, the language of the whole Bible. The Adversary counteracts this appeal, by persuading men to give up their reason and themselves to the guidance of some other power—of a single man, or of a multitude, of Pope or Council, of Apostate Priest, or False Prophet. God permits these deceivers to do their work of mischief. He only reiterates His appeal to human reason; speaking to each man by His own constituted witnesses—His Creation, His Spirit, His Written Word, His Holy Sacraments, His Holy Church. The Church is God’s witness, only when she delivers what she received, and received in the beginning, when Apostles

were her members, and when she was chosen to be a witness—"the pillar and ground of the truth."

O Almighty God, who hast built Thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple, acceptable unto Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer for the Church of the Holy Spirit.

THE END.

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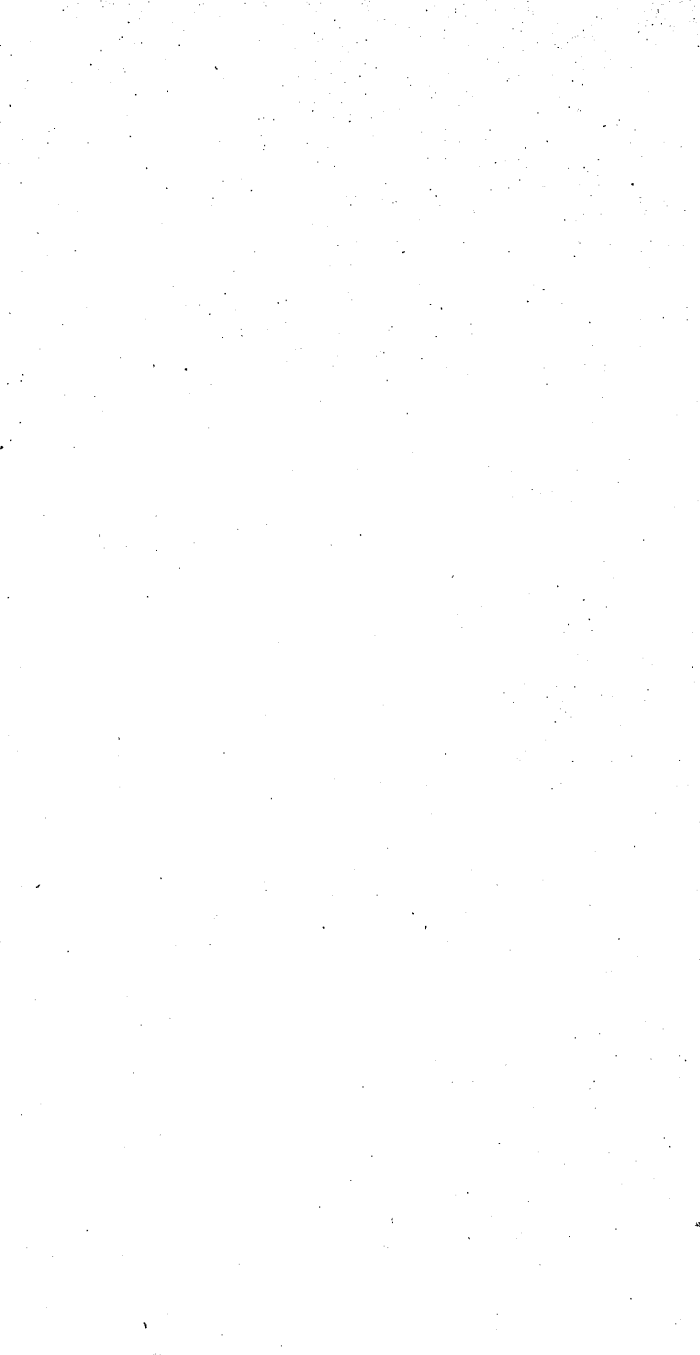
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